the weekly
Standard
JANUARY 1 / JANUARY 8, 2007 $3.95

GEORGE W. BUSH, BELIEVE IT OR NOT
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

The Peace Party vs. the Power Party

MATTHEW CONTINETTI
on the real divide
in American politics

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Iraq: Last Chance

A political settlement before any withdrawal

To concede that going to war in Iraq was a grave mistake of policy is not to embrace the conclusion that an immediate pullout—or one by a declared date moderated by conditions on the ground—would today serve U.S. interests. The country may have entered the war with erroneous notions of the state of Saddam's WMD programs. It may have underestimated the resilience of former Baathists and regime loyalists, their access to weapons, and the help they would get from foreign jihadists. It may have failed to anticipate that a society divided and oppressed by an authoritarian ruler might erupt into ethnic and religious conflict when that leader departs. It may have been naive in thinking that an externally modeled Iraqi democratic government would opt for secular rather than sectarian parliamentary representation and that its near-perfect transition would transform the region into a galaxy of democratic states. And it may have underestimated the number of troops needed to occupy a country of 25 million. Yet the answer is not to compound those mistakes by leaving in a way that makes large-scale civil war nearly inevitable, pushes the country into the lap of its Iranian neighbor, or advertises the United States as an unreliable friend, a hesitant hegemon, and a rewarder of those terrorists with the tenacity to outlast the behemoth. No, when a great power puts its leg in a snare, there must be some cure other than amputation.

—Robert Zelnick

The Scapegoats among Us

Blame-shifting after 9/11

To judge by current intellectual trends, many post-9/11 attempts to diagnose the American soul, both here and in Europe, have served less to clarify reality than to gravitate toward safer and more palatable substitutes. It is a fraught, fascinating spectacle worth exploring in detail—the more so because a parallel outpouring of books, especially from the contemporary European front, makes very clear what today's obvious displacements of political passion are really about.

—Mary Eberstadt

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Self-Improvement, *U.S. News*-style

Despite our youthful mien, The Scrapbook has been around awhile, and as a good American, over the decades, we've sampled our share of self-improvement regimens, from Prof. Emile Coué's formula for happiness ("Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better") to the Dale Carnegie Course (*How to Win Friends and Influence People*) to Rolfing (we're still sore). So imagine our delight when this week's issue of *U.S. News & World Report* landed on our desk, featuring this cover: "50 Ways to Improve Your Life in 2007."

Talk about News You Can Use™! But then—well, imagine our disappointment when we rolled up our sleeves, took a deep breath, and prepared to improve our life. Of the 50 ways to make ourselves better Scrapbookers, most are anodyne (Stop Type 2 Diabetes Before You Get it; Join a Reading Club; Take Up an Instrument—Again; Lose Weight; Save Fuel), some are politically correct (Downsize Your Ride; Learn About Islam; Support Local Farmers), and some sound as if our friends at *U.S. News* think it's still 1971 (Unplug the Television; Do Something About Darfur; Lose Those Shoes).

50 Ways to Improve Your Life

Turn Up Your Suction Power

It doesn't have the glamour of a Sub-Zero refrigerator, but it's hard to imagine life without the vacuum cleaner. The Rodney Dangerfield of home appliances turns 100 in 2007 and has undergone some revolutionary changes that have dramatically improved its efficiency. So if you're still pushing dust around with that ancient Hoover, it

effective: The multi-ply mic filter capture more fine dus and allows fo greater air flo which sustain suction. And t high-efficienc particulate ai ter sucks up e more dust: 99 percent of par

Some are positively dangerous (Start Your Own Blog; Give Your Teen More Driving Time; Work Up a Sweat in Less Time), some are painfully fatuous (Read *The Audacity of Hope* by Sen. Barack Obama, who "invites us to discard the mutual blame inherent in red-state-blue-state thinking in favor of a broad-based progressive political sensibility that is both civic and civil"), and some defy explanation (Drink Some Cups of White Tea; Turn Up Your Suction Power; Learn to Print Better Photos).

To be honest, The Scrapbook ended up tossing the issue aside in disappointment—and a little anger, too. For who, in his right mind, believes that installing crown molding in your dining room, coaching your kid's sports team, or writing a family cookbook lines the path toward happiness? Not us. In fact, from The Scrapbook's point of view, the 51st way to improve your life in 2007 is to chase *U.S. News & World Report*'s editor in chief down the street with a rolled-up umbrella in hand. It's aerobic, low tech, and satisfaction is guaranteed. ♦

The Perils of Spellcheck

The most entertaining Reuters dispatch in a long time was filed by Ross Colvin from Baghdad, on December 19. Someone (we'd blame the copy desk if we were you, Ross) obviously set the spellcheck on full automatic mode. Our comments are in brackets:

"In a report on Monday, the Pentagon said the Medic Army militia of radical Shiite cleric Montana al-Sadri [first cousin of Nebraska al-Tikriti] had replaced al Qaeda as the 'most dangerous accelerant of potentially self-sustaining sectarian violence in Iraq.' . . . U.S. commanders in Iraq have previously been reluctant to blame the Medic Army by name [yes, normally they call it the Mahdi army]. . . . Shiite Prime Minister Nora al-Malice [no relation to Nora Ephron] . . . has vowed to dismantle the militias but has done little so far to rein them in."

We recommend Clint Eastwood to play the part of "Montana" in the new movie, *You're in the Medic Army, Now.* ♦

Heads Will Roll!

Last week, the Deutsche Oper in Berlin finally performed its version of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. You may recall in September the opera was canceled because it was deemed too controversial and an "incalculable security risk." The reason: It would have featured the severed head of Muhammad (along with the heads of Jesus Christ, Buddha, and Poseidon—not that anyone seems to worry about the sensitivities of Christians, Buddhists, or, um, Atlantians).

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But then came the public outcry over the cancellation. Chancellor Angela Merkel called it "self-censorship out of fear"; Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble insisted, "We will not accept it."

And so the curtain was finally raised. When Idomeneo emptied his sack of heads, one heckler is reported to have yelled "Stop it!" and "Boo!" He was quickly countered by other shouts of "Continue!" And at the opera's end, the audience showed its support with thunderous applause.

The Scrapbook applauds, too, on principle. As for director Hans Neuenfels's rendition of this Mozart classic, in which the severed heads represent a liberation from organized religion—a modern German interpretation Roger Kimball rightly describes as "gratuitously offensive" and "anachronistic balderdash"—we are going to have to side with the heckler. ♦

Dial T for Taliban

An extra scrupulous Reuters reporter was on the job in Kabul last week, bearing the good news that "NATO and Afghan forces have killed about 50 Taliban fighters in the past few days in an operation in southern Afghanistan, an alliance spokesman said on Wednesday. . . . There were no casualties among NATO and Afghan forces in the latest operation, said NATO spokesman Brigadier Richard Nugee. The Taliban could not be contacted immediately for comment."

That's right: You can't trust those lying NATO spokesmen without checking first with the terrorists—sorry, not *terrorists*, but "Taliban fighters." ♦

The Way We Live Now

Notable achievements from the Smith College class of 2000, as related in the latest *Alumni Quarterly*:

"In other wedding news, Christie Rowe married Sila Thielke . . . in July. She sends apologies to 'all my Smithie friends who I told that I didn't believe in the "heteronormative subjugation."' She adds, 'Sadly I couldn't get Sila to take my name, unlike Sarah (Cliffy) Clifthorne '02 who just married Scott Bailey Clifthorne and gave birth to Emerson Clifthorne!' . . . Jason Goldbarg sends his first update! After nearly six years living in Boston and working for Harvard University, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Theatre Offensive, and as a self-employed gardener, he has moved on. He writes, 'In 2001, I began my lifelong gender transition. My name is Jason and I am a self-identified queer trannyboy. I enjoy playing with animals, gardening, and creating art, and I am currently a painter and mosaic artist.'"

Way to go Smithies! And on that happy note, we wish you all a prosperous and healthy new year. ♦

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Casual

Eatin' Good in the Neighborhood

In 1926, the Michelin guide to restaurants began using star ratings to separate exceptional eateries from the mediocre. That system is still in use today. One star merits a drop-in, provided it is on your way. Two stars, according to the guide, denotes "excellent cooking and worth a detour." And driving to that rare establishment with three stars is "worth the journey." In 1979, Nina and Tim Zagat introduced their own survey of restaurants with a few more levels of criteria, including a scale of 1 (poor) to 30 (outstanding). To these, I would like to add the distinction between "city good" and "suburb good."

Since moving to the Northern Virginia suburbs last April, my wife and I have been looking for a few restaurants to replace our favorite standbys in the District. In search of sushi, we read about a place down the street: "This friendly neighborhood restaurant in the Blankety-Blank Shopping Center does sushi American-style: big, with combinations that often snub tradition and with good results." So we went. We won't be back. Unlike the Sake Club in Washington, with its delicately arranged pieces of fresh sushi and intimate atmosphere, the Virginia establishment was lit with fluorescent bulbs, the service was slow, the miso soup used the preprocessed variety of tofu, and the sushi itself had a slightly rubberish texture. This place was "suburb good" at best.

When someone describes Tenpenh in the District as a good Asian restaurant, that person means "city good." Its menu could have been featured in Bernardo Bertolucci's film *The Last Emperor*. Meanwhile, a few friends and coworkers recommended a spot for excellent Peking duck that's located in a strip mall in Virginia. The service was prompt, though I was distracted by the fish tank directly behind my wife. One sorry fish was trapped in the corner bobbing upside down while another lay on the floor of the tank, dead. Under the circumstances, we took a pass on the crispy whole fish, though the duck was quite tender. My friends had clearly meant this place was "suburb good."

Nearly all the local critics rave about Citronelle in Georgetown. Winner of many restaurant awards, Citronelle is home to the acclaimed chef Michel Richard. It is the epitome of "city good" with its "promenade gourmand" menu of eggplant gazpacho, soft shell crab, halibut, duck, and lobster medallion. Another "city good" restaurant is CityZen. A colleague of mine called his dinner there one of the best gastronomic experiences of his life (and he would know). *Esquire* used the words "dramatic sensuality" to describe its food. The chef, Eric Ziebold, is a veteran of The French Laundry in California. His tasting menu currently offers "sashimi of bluefin toro with papaya confit, onion marmalade and umé gelée" and "carnaroli risotto biologico with Castelmagno cheese and shaved white truffles from Alba." I'm not sure what half the items are (umé gelée?) but it all sounds exquisite.

Not that I have been to either restaurant. Alas, the term "city good" also means pricey: CityZen's tasting menu comes to $90 per person, and ordering that "carnaroli risotto biologico" tacks on an additional $30. And did I mention the oxymoronic dress code of "sophisticated business casual"? Meanwhile, at Citronelle, the "promenade gourmand" menu is a whopping $155 per person. With the "wine degustation," the individual price rises to an even more preposterous $255.

Now, a restaurant marked as "suburb good" should not be dismissed out of hand. On a recent trip to the Hard Times Cafe in Arlington, a coworker and I ordered two drinks totaling $8. In D.C., this would have cost us double. Worse, "city good" places like McCormick & Schmick's on K Street have the audacity to charge a "pouring fee" when you order a martini. And while Washington has witnessed a high-end culinary boom, it still lacks good pizza and Philly cheesesteaks.

Besides, sometimes you are in the mood for something "suburb good," without an *amuse bouche* or a pretentious dress code. You want to eat somewhere with no rules, just right. I mean, of course, the Outback steakhouse. The service is friendly and the steak (if ordered medium or medium-rare) is perfectly acceptable. Dinner entrees range from $11-$24. The beer is fairly cheap too—and no pouring fee.

The chefs at the Outback might not make a sashimi of bluefin toro with papaya confit. I'm also certain they don't make an onion marmalade. But they do make a Bloomin' Onion.

Victorino Matus

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Merciful Mercenaries

Mark Hemingway's "Warriors for Hire" (Dec. 18) was a refreshing relief from the smears about Blackwater that have been spread by the left over the past year. Erik Prince is a remarkable American patriot, which is why the *Nation* and its journalistic running-dogs hate him.

With the wise Africa hand Cofer Black now helping to run the company, a Blackwater peacekeeping mission to Sudan's western Darfur region would be the best and least expensive way to mitigate the suffering of thousands of innocent people. The African Union force and the U.N. troops are losers. Blackwater is a winner.

In my view, though, Hemingway was unfair to Tim Spicer, the founder of Aegis Defense Services. I have known Spicer for years through mutual friends, and he is a good man. Also, Simon Mann's efforts to overthrow Equitorial Guinea were laudable, not contemptible. I'm sorry that Hemingway took the mainstream media view of the attempt. Certainly the citizens there would have welcomed Mann's relief. Robert Young Pelton, whose book *Licensed to Kill* appears to be a source, is not as "thorough" as your author may think. I spoke with Pelton in Chicago a few months ago, and his hatred for Tim Spicer, as he expressed it to me, was odd and highly personal and seemed to affect his judgment.

Richard W. Carlson
Foundation for the Defense of Democracies
Washington, D.C.

Mark Hemingway responds: I'll freely admit that Tim Spicer's story is more complex than the necessary economy of words allows. I think, however, that Mann's and Spicer's reputations are somewhat earned. Mann's recent escapades remain particularly troubling. Most people agree that any attempt by private citizens motivated by profit to destabilize a government, even one as despotic as Equitorial Guinea's, is a situation fraught with peril.

As for my reliance on Pelton, while I did find his work helpful, I began the

article before I was familiar with him or his recent book came out. Of the knowledgeable people who aren't already in the private military industry that I spoke to in the course of my research, most seemed to be on the same page as Pelton. Since my article was published, though, I have had ongoing discussions with a representative of Spicer's Aegis Defense Services, and they are making an effort to be forthright in explaining Spicer's past and Aegis's actions. Spicer appears to be eager to prove he's a force for good despite his checkered reputation, and I hope this turns out to be true.

A Nominal Defense

Regarding Joe Queenan's "What's in a Name?" (Dec. 18): I should come right out and say that I have a daughter named Rhiannon. Like her brothers, Michael and Patrick, she has an Irish name, but besides her Irish ancestral connection, she was also named Rhiannon because it is a beautiful sounding name. No, it has nothing to do with the occult. Rhiannon was the queen of the fairies, which still are held in high esteem in many Western cultures. The Celts do not consider fairies occult. But Queenan may if it makes him feel better.

And how about that Stevie Nicks connection? Her then-20-year-old song never crossed our mind when our daughter was born 11 years ago. Until Queenan's article, I have had just one person in those years suggest a connection between the song and my daughter's name. That person was named Mary and named her child Joe. Does that suggest a phobia of nonboring names?

By the way, in those 11 years I have had scores of people tell me that Rhiannon is a beautiful name. I can guarantee that Joe Queenan's parents never heard that compliment about their son's name. Joe—now there is a name that just rolls off the tongue with a warm rhythm. The parents of a kid with a name like that must have spent all of three seconds in their search. I suppose four letters would have been a stretch for them.

It is unfortunate for the kids that had to grow up with such a boring name as

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Joe. But Queenan? There are all sorts of implications with that name that had to make growing up a bit difficult. But that is Queenan's cross to carry, and I should leave that alone.

JOHN ("SHAMIQUA") LAPADAT
St. Paul, Minn.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBIA

I WAS PLEASED to read THE SCRAPBOOK's "Utter Abstractions at Columbia" (Dec. 18) concerning Andrew Delbanco's essay in the *New Republic* about teaching a course on war at Columbia. As a Columbia student and a U.S. Marine Corps officer candidate, I found that Delbanco's statements rang all too true for me. His essay is relevant because it highlights several situations that confront those involved with the military at Columbia.

First, as Delbanco notes, there is virtually no interaction between Columbia students and the military. Though some on campus make clear their vehement hatred for the military, the general feeling toward the military community is one of apathy, which in some ways is more difficult to confront than the passion of campus radicals intent upon criticizing the military come what may. It's easier to expose a fool and a hypocrite than it is to rally a person who simply does not care. As a member of the Hamilton Society, a campus group run by students involved with the military, I perceive this apathy to be one of the main problems that we seek to remedy. Instead of focusing on the fools that parade standard antimilitary myths such as the use of minorities for "cannon fodder," we have adopted the strategy of promoting interaction between the military community and the general student body. Our hope is that a chance to see the military up close will bring this country's defense forces into a more immediate realm for these students.

And, of course, as noted by THE WEEKLY STANDARD, there is no official officer training program at Columbia, a reality which serves further to isolate the smattering of candidates and cadets from the community at large. In the end, though, the problem is not ROTC or Columbia's decision to throw the program off campus in 1968, but the fact that our current culture no longer supports service in the military in the same way that it once did. By the time students arrive at Columbia, they have already written off the military option and relegated the notion of service to their country to an arena that is solely for the middle class, the poor, or the fools who still devote themselves to the quaint idea of patriotism. While the inclusion of ROTC and other such programs would be a huge step toward a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the military on campus, the real shift needs to occur in American culture.

AUSTIN BYRD
New York, N.Y.

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THE FEMME WAS FATALE

JOHN PODHORETZ's "Lost in Translation" (Dec. 18) does a disservice to the memory of Natasha, one of the villains in the Rocky & Bullwinkle cartoons. Natasha's family name was Fatale, not "Nogoodnik." However, Natasha and her fellow Russian spy, Boris Badenov, were always introduced, in the opening segment of each cartoon, as "the world-famous nogoodniks."

JAY WEISER
New York, N.Y.

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Reform with Results

President Bush has it backwards. No, not on Iraq, where he understands the foolishness of calls for retreat and the urgent need to deploy more troops, secure Baghdad, and achieve victory. Bush's wrongheadedness is on a matter of domestic policy.

He's obsessed with advancing Social Security reform by negotiating a deal with Democrats. At the same time, he seems indifferent to promoting the one health care reform already positioned to make a big difference: health savings accounts. Thus Bush talked up a bipartisan compromise on Social Security last week in an interview with the *Washington Post* and in a year-end White House press conference. He broached the subject of HSAs only at the tail end of a signing ceremony for the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006.

Social Security reform, a favorite issue of Bush's since he ran for the House in the late 1970s, is a trap, in terms of both policy and politics. Bush cannot get what he wants—and what the country needs—in any deal with congressional Democrats. The inevitable "compromise" would be two-pronged: a whopping tax increase and substantial benefit cuts for the middle class and the wealthy. Such compromise is a political loser for Republicans. Worse, it would not include any reforms, such as the creation of personal investment accounts. And like the similar Social Security "solution" in 1983, which was supposed to assure solvency for 75 years, it would promise vastly more than it would deliver.

On the other hand, HSAs, even in their embryonic stage (3.6 million people are now using them), represent real reform. They consist of tax-deductible funds, to pay for doctor's visits and everyday health needs like prescription drugs, and insurance to cover catastrophic illness. They provide the key elements of serious health care reform. With consumers in control of how, when, and where they spend their health care dollars, HSAs inject market forces into the medical system that are bound to restrain costs. And they provide families with security against having their savings wiped out by the costs of addressing prolonged or devastating health problems.

For the president's purposes, HSAs have another advantage. To extend their use, Bush doesn't need the approval of Democrats, most of whom oppose HSAs. Legislation passed in the lame duck session of Congress made it easier for companies and individuals to sign up. All that's required of the president is to mount the bully pulpit to spread the good word about HSAs and promote their use. Bush sees himself as a reformer. This is where he could be one.

If further health care reform—in Medicare, say—were possible in 2007, Bush might be excused for not making HSAs a top priority. But Democrats not only oppose reform—period!—they now have the clout to block any and all reform measures. They are reactionaries. And this applies to Social Security as well. Their interest is in preserving the system in amber, as if life expectancy, the ratio of retirees to workers, and the tax bite on American families haven't changed since the 1930s. So any deal that meets the guidelines for reform that Bush boldly laid out in 2005 is a nonstarter for Democrats.

Bush has already made one mistake. He declared that all issues are on the table, without insisting that Democrats do the same. And word has trickled out of the White House that Bush is reluctant but willing to accept a deal without personal investment accounts, the sine qua non of reforms. The result: A tax hike is on the table, but personal investment accounts, in effect, are off. The press and indeed most of the political community in Washington now expect a Social Security agreement to be a mixture of a tax increase, which Democrats crave, and a benefit cut, which Bush and Republicans are supposed to favor.

By accepting such a deal, the president may imagine he'll at long last be proclaimed a uniter, not a divider. But it won't happen. He'll divide his own party. Most Republicans don't want a tax hike (or, for that matter, a benefit cut). They want reform. This is particularly true of conservatives. Were Bush to approve a substantial tax increase without any compensating reform, he would sever his last solid link with conservatives. And who could blame them?

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors

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Believe It or Not

Presidents and their convictions.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

When George W. Bush addresses the nation with his Iraq proposals in early January, a great many people will be disappointed. They will be so because the president is unlikely to change the position he has held all along: that in Iraq victory, or something that looks to the world like victory, is still essential, crucial even.

How could it be otherwise? George W. Bush is not, strictly speaking, a politician; he came, after all, to politics late. He is instead a believer. It may well be in his nature to believe, as witness his midlife conversion to earnest Christianity. But there can be very little doubt that, on the morning of September 11, 2001, he also acquired political religion. He *believes* American security is being challenged; he *believes* this challenge must be met directly and with force; and he *believes* that he knows what is best for the country which he has been chosen to lead. The question of the rightness of his belief may be debated; but about the sincerity of his belief there can't be much question.

Four or so years ago, I heard the comedian Jackie Mason mock George W. Bush's slender rhetorical powers. "He stumbles, he stutters, he mispronounces. He goes arghh, he goes ahhh; he twists himself up in words; it's hopeless. Unlike Bill Clinton, who speaks with never a pause, never a miscue, never a hitch of any kind. You know, when you come to think of it, it's a hell of a lot easier to speak well when you don't believe a word you're saying."

More than merely amusing, this comic bit is provocatively suggestive. What it suggests is that American presidents can be divided into those who are true believers and those who are something else: managers, politicians, operators, men who just wanted the job. While in office, Bill Clinton, who seems to have had as little true belief as any politician in recent decades, sensed that the country wanted to move to the center, so he moved to the center along with it: changing the welfare system, doing nothing radical about health care, rocking no boats, giving the people what the polls told him they wanted.

Belief in itself, in a political figure, is not sufficient to make him either good or bad. Everything of course depends on the content of the belief. I do not know American history well enough to run through all 43 of our presidents, designating the believers and nonbelievers among them. But I think I can do so fairly quickly from the presidency of Harry S. Truman, the first president in my lifetime of whom I had awareness, through the present day in a way that, I hope, is instructive.

Truman wasn't supposed to possess anything resembling belief; when he came to the presidency at the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, he was considered a politician of the ward-heeling type, beholden to the Pendergast machine in Kansas City. Yet he was called on to make some of the most significant decisions of the 20th century—including that of dropping atomic bombs on Japan—and it is impossible to imagine him making that decision without deep belief in its rightness. As it happens, the decision was one that every American serviceman, even ardent liberals among them, viewed as the correct decision.

Dwight David Eisenhower had no strong beliefs that I can make out. He was thought to be the right man at the right time, someone who would stabilize the country after the Korean war and becalm the disrupting antics of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Such at least was the reason that Walter Lippmann gave for endorsing him over Adlai Stevenson in 1952. Eisenhower believed in order, in advancing the interests of business, in adherence to the law of the land (he sent federal troops into Little Rock, Arkansas, to secure the integration of schools). But his belief was cool; in none of these discrete items did he seem passionate. To be a true believer, passion is required.

John F. Kennedy was a nonbeliever, however much his public-relations minions (Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Ted Sorensen, and others) wished everyone to think otherwise. He just wanted to be president of the United States; perhaps more important, his father, the egregious Joe Kennedy, wanted a son in the White House, and was willing to pay for it. Had he lived longer, Kennedy might have come to belief, but it is difficult to find clear evidence of strong belief in any of his actions or in his overall approach to governing.

Lyndon Johnson was a believer, alas, to his own detriment. He believed in extending the program of FDR (who may himself not have believed in it), in civil rights, and (disastrously for his political career) in the need for an American victory in Vietnam. The great irony of Johnson's career is that the man everyone considered the operator *par excellence* until he ascended to the presidency was brought down by his own genuine beliefs.

Difficult to imagine Richard Nixon actually believed in anything. This is not to say that he wasn't smart or didn't have ideas, especially ideas about world order, many of them

Joseph Epstein, a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *is author most recently of* Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy's Guide.

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reinforced for him by Henry Kissinger. But it does appear that the only serious question in his mind was how to maintain himself in power, which is of course precisely what he was unable to do.

Gerald Ford was on the scene too briefly to establish any strong beliefs, let alone act upon them. Yet, beliefless though he may have been, he seems to have been the right man at the right time, decent, undramatic, and dull, which was just what the country needed after the scandal of Watergate.

Jimmy Carter, who brought the first hot-comb into the White House, also brought with him the strong but vapid belief that something resembling the Golden Rule will work in government, even in foreign relations. He qualifies as a believer but an extremely naive one—and such, today, does he remain.

Ronald Reagan may have been the most successful presidential believer in recent American history, though even he was only half successful in carrying out those beliefs. He believed in lessening the role of big government but was unable to do much about it. More important, he believed that communism was tyranny, pure and simple, an evil empire, and by not temporizing with it, he helped bring it down. Belief was at the heart of the Reagan presidency—it was almost all there was to it, and it was enough.

George H.W. Bush was a president with no known passionate beliefs. He had all his life been working on the perfect résumé: Skull & Bones, World War II hero, successful businessman, CIA director, so that the résumé's final entry, president of the United States (1989-93), was all but prefigured. But why he wanted it, apart from allowing him, when golfing, to wear a windbreaker with the presidential seal, the only logo worth possessing, is not easy to make out. Difficult to make out, too, anything, politically, that he cared so deeply about that he would never compromise on it.

Testing the likely 2008 presidential candidates for belief is an interesting exercise. One of the worrisome things about Hillary Rodham Clinton is that it isn't entirely clear whether she is a true believer or just another standard politician, whose only question is how do I climb to the top of the greasy pole to the presidency. Since her election to the Senate, she has played artfully at being the standard pol. But is there, beneath the great senatorial platitudinarian, a woman who has deep beliefs about changing the country? Hillary the believer is much more frightening than Hillary the business-as-usual political hack.

George W. Bush, September 14, 2001

Reuters / CORBIS / Win McNamee

Barack Obama seems, at this point, too callow to possess serious beliefs. He wants justice, he wants peace, he wants honor for the nation, he wants all good things for all people, and he wants these things without messy conflict. His brief but blazing senatorial career thus far has been devoted to demonstrating his charm and goodness. But wants, charm, self-proclaimed virtue are different from beliefs, and we cannot know in what he genuinely believes.

John McCain has the look and feel, not least the testiness, of a believer, but the question in his case is in what exactly does he believe, apart from his own integrity, which seems genuine. Or is he merely pugnacious (instead of wily) for the public good? Nobody knows, and one wonders if McCain himself knows in what, politically, he truly believes.

Belief is not a sine qua non in a president. At times the country does better with a politician whose aim goes little beyond keeping the ball in play, the game in motion. And where belief is detectable, the question of course is what is the content of the belief a candidate holds. If Churchill was a believer, so was Hitler.

Yet no great American president I can think of has not been a believer. The greatest of our presidents, perhaps the greatest American, Abraham Lincoln, was great precisely because of his deep, almost religious belief in the necessity of maintaining the Union and doing everything he could to keep it intact. Had they then existed, polls heavily in favor of his bringing the boys back home by stopping the Civil War would scarcely have dissuaded him.

The issue of belief in a political leader elides into that of the nature of political leadership itself. In a democracy, does a leader follow the wishes of the people, or does he lead them through the force of his own vision? In the best of circumstances, the political leader persuades the people of the correctness of his own beliefs. This, thus far, George W. Bush has been unable to do. But to expect him, because of this failure, to abandon those beliefs may be as unrealistic as many feel the president's own deeply held beliefs are. No one should be surprised, let alone shocked, or outraged, when he turns out to be unable to do so, and chooses to stand by his beliefs to the end. ♦

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Field of Dreams

Sam Brownback does some spadework in Iowa.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

Sam Brownback lives closer to Iowa than any of the other Republicans likely to run for president in 2008. Brownback, the senior senator from Kansas, resides in Topeka, which is but a few hours by car from Iowa. And he plans to travel there quite a lot over the next 12 months—through January 21, 2008, the day Iowa Republicans plan to declare their presidential preferences.

Three weeks ago Brownback set up a presidential exploratory committee. That allows him to raise money and gauge support for a presidential race without actually announcing his candidacy. Brownback may decide not to run. But it would be unusual for someone to go so far as to establish an exploratory committee—John McCain has one and so does Rudy Giuliani—and then back out. (Evan Bayh is the exception to this rule.) Rob Wasinger, Brownback's former chief of staff and now his campaign manager, says Brownback will make a formal announcement within the next two months.

Brownback has been doing what likely presidential candidates do at this point in the preparing-to-run process. He's been working on campaign themes and their presentation, and also supervising production of a forthcoming autobiography designed to introduce him to a skeptical nation and a dismissive punditry.

A member of the House in 1995-96 and a senator since then, Brownback, who just turned 50, has polled between 0 and 3 percent in recent surveys of Republicans asked whom they'd vote for in a hypothetical GOP presidential primary. Two or 3 percent, however, is good enough for fifth place in those polls, and Brownback is banking on Iowa to boost his chances of winning the nomination.

Though the dates may move up by a week or two, Iowa will be the first state on the schedule of primaries and caucuses by which the GOP will choose its presidential nominee. New Hampshire will be a week later, and South Carolina a few days after that. As currently scheduled, these early contests will be immediately followed by Super Tuesday, when GOP voters in at least 10 states will choose their candidate. Brownback would probably not be on the verge of running for president if Iowa, with its peculiar caucus process, were not first on the nominating schedule.

The way the GOP caucuses work is this: Participants in a given precinct meet on a Monday night. If the past is any guide, more than 100,000 Republicans will show up for the roughly 1,800 precinct meetings across the state. These caucuses can last for hours, as participants state and defend their candidate preferences before voting, after which the results are phoned in to party headquarters. Caucus-goers like to be personally wooed by the candidates, and the process of wooing takes place in the small-group meetings held with candidates in the months beforehand.

Iowa is a state where huge media buys, which Brownback couldn't afford anyway, may not help a candidate that much. "You can't just walk in hoping to win by spending money on radio and television ads," says Kevin McLaughlin, a Des Moines stockbroker, president of Iowans for Discounted Taxes, and now a member of Brownback's exploratory committee. On the other hand, a candidate who does well in small groups can be formidable. And Brownback's backers declare that their man is especially good in that setting. "He wears well with people," says Chuck Hurley, a lawyer and former Iowa state legislator who is also a member of the exploratory committee. "He's optimistic, he's aspirational, he's comfortable in his own skin. The more people he meets, the more people there will be who say, 'I am really impressed.'"

Hurley and other supporters add that Brownback, who grew up on a farm in Kansas and served as his state's agriculture commissioner back in the 1980s, will have a natural rapport with the many Iowans who live in or come from the rural parts of the state. "The agriculture community will trust and like him," says Hurley.

Brownback plans to run as an unabashed social conservative—pro-life, for traditional marriage, for adult but not embryonic stem cell research, and for the appointment of judicial conservatives. Against the view that compassionate conservatism has run its course, he would embrace that approach to governing and include within it prison reform and combating deadly diseases like malaria abroad.

Social conservatives have constituted 25 to 30 percent of the participants in recent Republican caucuses, and Brownback is hoping to increase their percentage this year. Former Brownback chief of staff and informal campaign adviser David Kensinger cautions against assuming from 2000 "a static caucus population" and forecasts "a big spike" in the percentage of social conservatives in 2008, up to "33 or 34 percent." Should that happen, Brownback would stand to benefit. Candidates ahead of him in the initial polls would seem to be less attractive to social conservatives: McCain, in part because he declined to support the federal marriage amendment; Giuliani, because he is pro-abortion rights and also against the marriage amendment; and Mitt Romney, because he has changed positions on abortion rights (once pro-choice, now pro-life).

The Brownback campaign, in short, sees an opportunity to position the senator as the standard-bearer for social conservatism. Jerry Zandstra,

Terry Eastland is publisher of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church and political activist in Michigan and a member of Brownback's exploratory committee, is attacking Romney online for his views on abortion (as well as on other social issues), describing him as a candidate who is "historically pro-choice" but whose position "depends on the next election." Zandstra is also taking on Giuliani ("unquestionably pro-choice") and McCain ("B-plus" on opposing abortion).

The Iowa Christian Alliance plans to put out before the caucuses what its president Steve Scheffler calls "a comprehensive voter guide." The alliance, which doesn't make endorsements, may also schedule a candidates' forum in May. Scheffler says it would be the first ever arranged by "a faith-based institution." The forum could offer Brownback a chance to sharpen his differences on social issues with McCain, Giuliani, and Romney.

Brownback, however, doesn't intend to run only as a social conservative. The day he announced his exploratory committee, he told a Republican audience in Cedar Rapids that he saw himself as "a full-scale conservative"—i.e., a fiscal and national security conservative as well as a social conservative. Wasinger notes that in 2000 the conservative base in Iowa fractured, with votes going to Steve Forbes (30 percent), Alan Keyes (14 percent), and Gary Bauer (9 percent). "Most Iowa Republicans are conservatives—pro-life, for low taxes, and strong on national security." Wasinger makes the obvious point: "If Brownback can hold the base together, he'll do well."

Of course, Brownback does not enjoy the stature of frontrunners McCain and Giuliani, although Iowa is where this will tell least. Another concern for his campaign is money. Indeed, if Brownback decides not to run, it will probably be that the price of admission is simply too high. But assuming Brownback does run and does well in Iowa, enough money will come in for him to continue—at least for another week or two. That would be longer than many a fifth-place starter last. ♦

A Revolution Gone Sour?

Ukraine's Orange team, two years later.

BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

Kiev

I went once to Guatemala as an election observer. In a remote spot in the mountains I remember asking Indian villagers through our interpreter why they wanted to stand so long in line to vote. The wait looked to be at least a couple of hours. One barefoot farmer wearing a big hat (they all wore hats) told me, "It's the only way to have our interests represented." I have to admit, democracy ideologue that I am, my heart jumped. I recall being in Berlin's Stadtmitte Starbucks in spring 2003 with an Iraqi friend just after Baghdad residents had toppled the statue of Saddam Hussein. My friend announced with a broad, infectious smile to the young woman behind the counter that there was much to celebrate, with Saddam now finally gone. She looked bewildered, even a little distressed.

Certain stereotypes about Americans and Europeans seem to stick. Americans are addicted to huge containers of food and beverage when we go to the movies. We like watching fires, murder, and mayhem on the nightly local news. We also tend to be fairly passionate about human freedom. Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" is a natural part of American culture. Europeans, on the other hand, tend to find inspiration in Bertolt Brecht's line, "*erst kommt das Fressen, dann die Moral*"—first comes getting fed, then come the moral issues. I have the feeling that many West Europeans, like the young woman at Starbucks, like their freedoms, too, but may cherish stability at least as much. That may be one reason the E.U. keeps yearning for a return of the realists in Washington. I watched a British journalist on BBC recently arguing with considerable fervor that democracy was not right for Belarus.

Having said this, Europeans did quite a bit to assist Ukraine's Orange revolution two years ago, when an illiberal, corrupt government stole an election only to see the result overturned by a massive display of people power. Millions participated in nationwide demonstrations. Supporting Ukraine's independent media, NGOs, student groups, and the like turned out to be a remarkable instance of transatlantic cooperation in democracy promotion. Some two-thirds of all registered voters came out to vote in the new elections which brought Viktor Yushchenko and his Orange team to power. Adrian Karatnycky, president of Freedom House at the time, wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that the Orange Revolution marked "a seismic shift Westward in the geopolitics of the region." Good news for America and for Europe.

I've come to Kiev to poke around on the eve of Vladimir Putin's December 22 visit to the Ukrainian capital. What a difference two years make. The Russian president has gone from "being the loser to being a player again," says Yuriy Ruban, director of the National Institute for Strategic Studies, a government-funded think tank. That profound pro-West shift looks suddenly tenuous.

Two years ago Moscow backed

Jeffrey Gedmin is director of the Aspen Institute Berlin and a columnist for Die Welt.

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Yushchenko's opponent Viktor F. Yanukovich. Rather vigorously. The Kremlin is believed to have had a hand in the dramatic dioxin poisoning that left Yushchenko disfigured. Then, after Yanukovich's defeat, Putin briefly halted gas deliveries to Ukraine when Yushchenko's new government balked at accepting a 400 percent price increase. The West Europeans were not amused either. They receive Russian gas through a Ukrainian pipeline. In the end, Kiev survived. The new government got off with a mere 90 percent increase. The Kremlin had made its point.

Since then the Orange Revolution has taken its hits. Expectations ran exceptionally high and Yushchenko failed to deliver fast enough on promises to battle corruption and reform the economy. Cuba, Syria, and Burkina Faso all fare better than Ukraine in fighting corruption according to Transparency International's latest survey. Last March, Yanukovich's Party of Regions came back to win a plurality in parliamentary elections, while Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party polled a disappointing 13 percent. And in August, the 56-year-old Yanukovich, former head of a Soviet transport company, completed his improbable comeback by becoming the country's new prime minister. Surprisingly, Yushchenko joined his nemesis in the government, becoming the country's president, and since then he has trimmed his sails on a number of fronts, giving supporters at home and abroad concern about his next moves.

Realists care about Ukraine. With nearly 50 million people and a territory the size of France, Ukraine is a pivotal player in the Black Sea region. Roughly 80 percent of Western Europe's gas imports pass through Ukraine. By 2010 Ukraine wants to start transiting Caspian and Azerbaijan oil to Europe. In September, Kiev got the Pentagon's attention when it signaled interest in selling its Kolchuga passive detection system to Iran. The radar system detects takeoff and formation of aircraft groups. Ukraine could easily revert to being a useful piece on the Russian chessboard as Putin tries to thwart American interests in different parts of the world.

What does Yushchenko want? People here tell me he wants to reposition himself politically to siphon off at least some of the support upon which Yanukovich relies in the pro-Russian eastern part of the country. Among other things, Yushchenko has been reaching out to influential businessmen with strong ties to Russia in an apparent attempt to build a counterweight to Yanukovich. This week he appointed Valery Khoroshkovsky, a businessman with close ties to the Russian steel industry, to become a senior member of his foreign policy team. Although Yanukovich has been slicing away at his power, the president of Ukraine still technically retains power over foreign and defense policy. The president understands, says one adviser, that NATO is "not the bestselling product at the moment." Public support for membership in the alliance has dropped by at least half to less than 20 percent in the last two years.

But allies insist that Yushchenko has not given up his robust pro-Western attitudes. He continues to advocate E.U. membership for Ukraine, even if that is a distant dream. He wants his country to take more active steps toward NATO membership and plans to embark on a campaign to reestablish and increase public support. "Yushchenko still sees joining NATO as Ukraine's best guarantee for independence," says a banker with close ties to the president.

What does Yanukovich want? He came to Washington recently, quoted Martin Luther King in a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and tried to convince Americans that he agrees E.U. and NATO membership would serve his country well, albeit at a much slower pace than Yushchenko once pushed for. "Yanukovich may not be so devilish a figure," says long-time democracy activist Inna Pidluska. She was not the only one who was surprised by the prime minister's recent announcement that Ukraine would not join a customs union with Russia.

Still, Putin acts as if he wants to buy Yanukovich, and some say Yanukovich looks like he's for sale. After Yanukovich's appointment as prime minister in August, Putin invited Yanukovich—and not the president as protocol would have dictated—to join the heads of state from the Eurasian Economic Community for meetings at the Russian resort town of Sochi. At the Sochi meetings, Russia's state-controlled gas monopoly Gazprom promised Yanukovich he need not worry about gas prices, at least until the end of the year. Incidentally, Belarussian dictator Alexander Lukashenko gets huge energy discounts for good behavior and loyalty to Moscow.

One could easily lose heart over such developments. At the moment, Ukraine looks positioned to muddle through at best. But then the Orange Revolution, like other outbursts of people power, was accompanied by a good deal of irrational exuberance. What totalitarian dictatorship took decades to destroy, democracy may take equally long to repair.

Ihor Kohut, who heads an NGO dealing with the Ukrainian legislature, urges Ukraine supporters to remember, "We've won the basic tools of democracy, such as fair and free parliamentary elections." A solid majority of Ukrainians support the right of independent NGOs to monitor elections. The head of Caritas Ukraine, a German journalist turned social worker and civic organizer named Andriy Waskowycz, tells me that the Orange Revolution awakened a strong civic spirit and social participation. In his view, this spirit is still alive, and it will be extremely difficult for anyone to put all this back in the bottle. To me, the democracy ideologue, that sounds about right. Meanwhile, as Vladimir Putin campaigns to restore Russia's position on the world stage, we still have a few other issues to ponder when we think about Ukraine. ♦

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Big Saudis on Campus

American universities can't solve the Kingdom's education problem. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

Saudi Arabia's monarchy faces increasing problems, all of which lead back to a school system that indoctrinates the country's subjects in Wahhabism, the ultrafundamentalist and violent interpretation of Islam that is the country's official religion.

Rather than effectively addressing that sensitive issue, the Saudis have come up with a novel solution for the woes of their higher-education system: They want to send 15,000 Saudi college students to America—far more than studied here in a typical year before the atrocities of September 11, 2001, which were perpetrated by 19 men, 15 of whom were Saudi subjects.

Early in November, the latest in a series of high-level Saudi-government meetings on education proposed that an independent commission prepare yet another review of school curricula—the third since 9/11. Some Saudis have called for a complete restructuring of state education, and some even demanded that the system expose pupils to differing interpretations of Islam. Also this fall, top officials blasted the government for allowing mismanagement at Saudi universities, and blamed the rulers for the low standing of the Saudi system of higher education in worldwide assessments of educational achievement.

But scrutiny of Saudi education has not been limited to critics inside the kingdom. Before 9/11, Saudi students routinely benefited from the "Visa Express" program, under which entry to the United States was granted automatically, through travel agencies. Three of the 9/11 hijackers had used the "Visa Express" to get into the United States. Following the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, new and demanding background checks, and provision for consistent monitoring of foreign students after they arrive in the United States, were made law.

Tightened U.S. controls have had an effect. On November 24, the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education announced it would postpone publishing the names of recipients of scholarships to foreign universities because of administrative obstacles in coordinating student visas from foreign embassies. In October, the Saudi daily *Okaz* declared that the FBI had broadened its watch over Saudi students in America—but that American universities want the Saudis back.

Saudi students in the United States have other problems beside Americans' feelings about them. Qenan al-Ghamdi, a writer for the Saudi daily *Al-Watan*, has accused the Saudi government of failing to pay fees for students in the United States, leading the education attaché at the Saudi embassy in Washington to deny the charge.

Nevertheless, the Saudis see a quick fix for their schooling woes in the departure of college students for the United States—in numbers almost three times higher than in more placid times. According to the *Saudi Gazette*, another media outlet in the kingdom, only 4,000 Saudis held U.S. educational visas in 2001, and the number fell to around 1,000 in 2004. On November 20, the Saudi-based *Arab News* reported cheerfully that at least 10,000 applicants should soon receive

Stephen Schwartz is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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confirmation of their visas from U.S. diplomatic representatives.

Earlier in the year, Saudi higher education minister Khalid al-Anqari stated that scholarships to the United States would focus on modern, scientific training in fields useful for the contemporary employment market, such as medicine, computer science, engineering, and physics. The ministry also announced that it expected 100,000 Saudi high school graduates to apply for scholarships abroad.

In American reporting, the prospective influx of Saudi college students has been described as a joint effort by the Bush administration and King Abdullah to alleviate problems between the two societies by introducing Saudis to American values while also building up links between the future elites of the two countries. Some American schools are clearly excited by the lure of Saudi money. In mid-November, 20 American universities held an education fair at al-Khobar. Back in the American heartland, the University of Northern Iowa announced that it would host a Saudi-government-sponsored celebration of Saudi culture.

A similar example of new Saudi blandishments operates in the opposite direction. A branch of the Saudi petroleum monopoly, Aramco Services Institute—part of the historically anti-reformist Saudi establishment that opposes King Abdullah—has created a program with the Institute for International Education called "Educators to Saudi Arabia." The hosts recently took 25 American middle school instructors to the kingdom for a Communist-style indoctrination tour. One participant, Sara Darnell from Michigan, was, like other American women visiting Saudi territory, forced to wear the full body cover known as the abaya. An interview she gave her hometown paper concluded with an absurd—if not disturbing—declaration. She had met Saudi women who were said to be oppressed, but, according to her, "The [American] news media sometimes does not portray Saudi Arabia that well. . . . The women we spoke to didn't necessarily reflect those sentiments." Apparently Darnell did not notice or understand the meaning of the abaya she was compelled to wear.

The confidence gap between the United States and Saudi Arabia is not a product of any historic lack of Saudis studying at U.S. colleges, but of continued Saudi backing for violent jihadism. To suddenly encourage up to 15,000 Saudis to come to America to study seems destined only to clog or stymie any process of background and security checks. Sources in the U.S. government already express doubts that the vetting of Saudi students will proceed with the efficiency necessary to accommodate such an ambitious program.

Wouldn't it make more sense for King Abdullah to cut the links between his government and the Wahhabi ideology, to reform the kingdom's own political and educational systems

Michael Ramirez

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first, to allow for religious liberty and free expression—and only then to ask that thousands of Saudis be accepted on trust into the U.S. higher education system? Even if they pass security examinations, Saudi students heading for America will still be products of the old, Wahhabi-based Saudi schools. Saudis already have plenty of ways to learn American values: via satellite television, the Internet, and reading. And younger members of the American elite would no doubt eagerly build relationships with their Saudi counterparts if the kingdom opened its borders to normal tourism.

For now, it seems absurd for the United States to bear the security burden of a risky immigration experiment involving a country whose status as a friend, ally, rival, or enemy seems as changeable as the desert sands. ♦

Dungeons, Dragons, and Taxes

The IRS is eyeing your hard-earned virtual gold.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST

In the beginning, there was the MUD. The first Multi User Dungeon, Richard Bartle and Roy Trubshaw's "MUD1," came online at the University of Essex in 1979. A text-based computer adventure game, much like the board game Dungeons & Dragons, the MUD allowed players at remote terminals to interact and play in the game's nearly 400-room virtual world—acquiring swords with which to slay dragons, and the like. It was a programming and gaming milestone.

As computers—and networks—spread and became vastly more powerful and pervasive, the idea of the MUD expanded and evolved. In 1998, the game design firm Verant Interactive created EverQuest, which it dubbed the first "Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game" or MMORPG. From the outside, EverQuest couldn't have looked more different from MUD1: Instead of text, players saw a complicated, three-dimensional, graphic version of a virtual world, and they chose an avatar to represent themselves in the activities of that world (trading, fighting, questing).

Unlike MUD1, which required expensive terminals hidden away in university computer labs, connected to gigantic main-frame computers, EverQuest could be played by almost anyone with a home computer and a modem. Also unlike MUD1, which hosted just dozens or scores of players at a time, EverQuest quickly accumulated nearly half a million players, each of whom paid an initial price for the purchase of the software and then a monthly fee of $12.95 for the privilege of slaying orcs, dragons, and other beasties in the virtual world while getting to interact with hordes of likeminded players.

Because a successful MMORPG franchise like EverQuest is a cash cow, many game developers have since gotten in on the action. Most of the games descend from the same swords-and-sorcery lineage as the original MUD1, the most successful being World of Warcraft—a property owned by Vivendi-Universal—which in November crossed the threshold of 7.5 million players worldwide. But there are other, nonfantasy online role-playing games, most notably Second Life, which offers the chance to live a "normal" life in a virtual world modeled on the real world. Players—or "residents," as they're referred to in the Second Life lexicon—go to work, hang out with friends, purchase houses. It's nearly as interesting as it is unsettling.

How big is the business of virtual gaming? Very big, but it exists at different levels. At the top level, multinational entertainment companies such as Vivendi-Universal and Sony (which now owns the EverQuest franchise) make hundreds of millions of dollars a year from these games. Take World of Warcraft: With 7.5 million subscribers paying about $15 a month each, that's a monthly cash gusher of $112.5 million. To put that in perspective, in 2006, all of the movies released by Universal together grossed about $800 million at the box office.

Beneath the corporate economy is a smaller consumer economy. MMORPGs have internal economies where virtual currency allows players to buy virtual goods. In Ultima Online, for instance, players win Britannian gold pieces by completing quests, slaying monsters, etc. These Britannian gold pieces can then be exchanged at shops in the game for special items—better weapons, better armor, mystical creatures—and between players within the games. Many players then hold real-world auctions, on websites such as eBay, to sell these virtual goods. This market is much bigger than you might expect.

In early 2005, for instance, a man named David Storey paid $26,500 for a virtual "Treasure Island" in the game Project Entropia. Later that year Jon Jacobs paid $100,000—remember, we are talking about real, U.S. dollars—for a virtual space station in the same game. Mind you, these aren't simply kids playing a game for fun—they are speculators hoping to get rich from the virtual economy. After his mammoth purchase, Jacobs told the tech website CNET, "I've seen the potential of it all, and I've gone through it, and I learned my lesson, and my lesson

Jonathan V. Last is online editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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was that I can't afford not to do this. I could not afford not to get the space resort. It's too valuable. The guy that bought the Treasure Island recouped his investment in a year."

Jacobs was probably influenced by the success of a Second Life player known as Anshe Chung, whose virtual land and currency holdings are estimated to be in the neighborhood of $1 million. (Second Life is the only MMORPG that gives actual property rights to players.)

That's the high end of the virtual market. If you go to eBay or any number of other websites you can find people selling virtual belongings or even avatars for smaller, but still significant, sums. A weapon could be as cheap as $50. An avatar might cost several hundred or even a couple thousand dollars. Virtual real estate—land, castles, buildings—is, as a rule, more expensive.

There are people who make their living by speculating in virtual goods. A piece on the "Unreal Estate Boom" in *Wired* magazine profiled Bob Kiblinger, a former chemist for Procter & Gamble who quit his job to create the site *UOTreasures.com*, which buys the accounts and virtual assets of MMORPG players and then resells them at a profit. Think of it as a virtual pawn shop. In 2005 the *New York Times* did a story on the phenomenon called "gold farming": There are companies in China, where labor is cheap, that pay people to sit in warehouses full of computers playing MMORPGs in order to accumulate virtual loot, which is then sold back to Western gamers.

The virtual currencies themselves have secondary markets. Websites such as *IGE.com* or *GameUSD.com* buy and sell the pretend currencies for real dollars. Second Life's unit of currency, the "Linden dollar," for instance, trades at a rate of about 300 Lindens to the greenback.

An article on these MMORPG economies at CNET estimated that the market for virtual goods and currency might be in the range of $880 million annually. Other estimates put the figure closer to $1 billion. All of which has created a fat target for a very brick-and-mortar institution: the Internal Revenue Service.

In 2004, Julian Dibbell wrote a piece in *Legal Affairs* detailing his attempt to make the sale of imaginary goods his primary source of income. In one year of playing Ultima Online he made $11,000 by selling Golden Runic Hammers, Britannian gold pieces, and other pretend items on eBay. Dibbell then went about trying to report this income to the IRS. It was quite an adventure.

Paraphrasing the IRS's bible on "Taxable and Nontaxable Income," Dibbell noted that "goods taken in trade or won at play are taxable the moment they fall into somebody's hands, even if they are not sold for money." So while Dibbell clearly understood that he owed taxes on the $11,000 he made from real-world auctions, what wasn't at all clear was whether the government would want a piece of the Britannian gold pieces he had won, Golden Runic Hammers he had purchased with them, and the other items which he had bartered, bought, or traded for during the year. Each of these items had real market value, even if he had not realized it by selling them on the real market.

The tax code is reasonably strict on such matters. As Bryan Camp, a tax law professor at Texas Tech Law School, explained to *Gamespot.com*, Section 61 of the U.S. tax code provides that all income, "from whatever source derived," is taxable. Meaning that "if two people were to exchange copies of books, one of which is worth $30 and the other worth $24, the person ending up with the more expensive volume would have acquired $6 of taxable income."

The IRS has been strict on the concept of barter. In the 1970s, a small network of barter clubs arose that sought to exchange goods and services between members without giving the government a cut. They used a marker called "trade dollars." As Dibbell explained, "In a 1980 ruling, the [IRS] said that barter club transactions produced taxable income, even though no actual money changed hands. A 1982 law made enforcement of the ruling easier by requiring clubs to provide the IRS with information about every transaction." The net effect of which was to shut down the clubs.

There are, of course, good reasons for the government to be interested in virtual economies. As Indiana University economist Ted Castronova points out, "From the standpoint of economic theory . . . there's no fundamental distinction between selling euros and buying magic wands." And just as opportunistic Chinese companies have become interested in them, virtual game markets might in the future attract other unwelcome attention. It is not hard to imagine them becoming appealing for criminal activities, such as money laundering.

In any event, Dibbell went up the chain of command at the IRS looking for a ruling on whether or not he owed taxes on the whole of his virtual economic activity, and not simply his eBay gains. Not yet ready to set precedent, the IRS declined to give an answer.

But that was two years ago. Today, the government has finally turned its attention to the matter. Speaking on a "Tax and Finance" panel at a recent computer gaming symposium, Dan Miller, a senior economist on Congress's Joint Economic Committee, shed some light on the government's developing stance towards virtual gaming.

Miller's committee began examining virtual gaming economies last October and is expected to issue a report early in 2007. And while Miller said that the committee wouldn't "[seek] to impose a new tax on virtual economies," he said that the report would clarify "what is a taxable event in a virtual world." "Congressional and IRS interest in this issue," he explained, "is simply a matter of time."

So gamers take note. The day may be approaching when, after killing an orc and slaying a dragon, you will get your 1,000 gold pieces—and a 1099 form. ♦

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The Peace Party vs. the Power Party

The real divide in American politics

By Matthew Continetti

The polarization that has characterized American politics since the presidency of Ronald Reagan has extended its reach to foreign affairs. Never have the differences between the two parties on issues of war and peace been so distinct. At no time since World War II has the divergence of partisan support for an ongoing war been as great. Nor have attitudes toward power—its origins, nature, and application—reflected ideological and partisan identification to the extent they do today.

The great divisions in American life—between low- and upper-income voters; those who attend religious services weekly and those who do not; people who are married and people who are single; voters with a post-graduate education and those without—are often less predictive of voting patterns than one's stance on the use of American power abroad. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press concluded in 2005 that "foreign affairs assertiveness now almost completely distinguishes Republican-oriented voters from Democratic-oriented voters." Together, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the March 20, 2003, invasion of Iraq seem to have accelerated a shift begun some 30 years ago: The Democratic party is increasingly linked with the attitudes, tendencies, and policies of peace, whereas the Republican party is increasingly linked with the maintenance and projection of American military power.

This is not to say that one party is entirely composed of doves and the other entirely of hawks. A look at our national politicians reveals exceptions to the dominant foreign policy tendency in either party. Nor can one say that the American electorate, taken as a whole, is bitterly divided over questions of foreign policy. Public opinion research has revealed that most Americans support similar foreign policy goals and share similar beliefs about the world and America's place in it. Most favor strengthening relationships with U.S. allies. Most prefer diplomacy to the use of arms, but will support the use of arms as a last resort. Most believe that America's global responsibilities extend beyond its own security. "Most Americans want security for themselves first," write political scientists Benjamin Page and Marshall Bouton in their new book *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*, "but they also want justice for others."

But this general consensus is only superficial. Look at the large majority of voters who are reliable partisans, and it begins to vanish. Furthermore, the attitudes and opinions of the partisan publics, Democrat and Republican, are reflected in the words and policies of each party's leaders. The Democratic party, its congressional delegation in particular, has embraced withdrawal from Iraq and, in its approach to the world, emphasizes negotiation without the threat of force. More than half the House Democrats in the outgoing Congress are cosponsors of Rep. John Murtha's resolution to "redeploy" American troops from Iraq at the "earliest practicable date." And the number of Murtha's cosponsors will almost certainly grow in the incoming Congress.

Visitors to the campaign websites of the 30 Democratic House freshmen will find that the incidence of Murtha's name is second only to that of George W. Bush—and Murtha is mentioned in a much more positive way. Of those Democratic House freshmen, only two use the word "victory" to describe their goal in Iraq. Speaker-designate Nancy Pelosi knows where her caucus is headed. Shortly after the November election, she told the Fox News Channel's Brit Hume that Iraq is "not a war to be won but a problem to be solved." To Pelosi, the solution to the problem of Iraq—American withdrawal—is self-evident.

If Democratic senators have not embraced peace to the same extent as their colleagues in the House, the reason is that they each represent millions of people who look at the world in diverse ways, not hundreds of thousands of people chosen by a computer or judge in order to guarantee a particular partisan outcome in a given district. Yet

Matthew Continetti is associate editor at The Weekly Standard.

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even in the Senate, the same partisan distinctions on foreign policy that we find elsewhere apply. And here, too, the results of the 2006 election guarantee that debate in the Senate over foreign affairs will swing toward peace and away from power. Democrats in favor of withdrawal from Iraq will replace Republican war supporters who currently hold seats from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, Montana, and Virginia. Sen. Carl Levin will chair the Armed Services Committee. And majority leader-designate Harry Reid has said he will back sending more combat forces to Iraq in 2007 only if it means that American troops will be leaving that country in 2008.

The Past

Few political clichés bear as little resemblance to reality as "partisanship stops at the water's edge." Consulting recent major works of popular diplomatic history—Walter A. McDougall's *Promised Land, Crusader State* (1997); Walter Russell Mead's *Special Providence* (2002); Robert Kagan's *Dangerous Nation* (2006)—one finds division and conflict over the course of foreign policy since the founding of the American republic. Battles between Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians, Populists and internationalists, isolationists and interventionists were, perhaps inevitably, partisan conflicts. And every conflict had a partisan resolution—the victory of one point of view or policy over another, leading to new conflicts and new partisan alignments. Developments overseas brought new pressures and interests to the fore at home; politics at home shaped events overseas.

In fact, in retrospect, the post-World War II era appears to have been unique. Ole R. Holsti, the George V. Allen professor emeritus of political science at Duke University and author of *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, concludes that bipartisan agreement characterized early Cold War foreign policy to an unusual degree. In 1945, 89 senators voted to ratify the United Nations treaty. The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO all enjoyed, in Holsti's account, "rather solid public support." In 1946 the Gallup organization asked respondents whether they favored an "active" U.S. foreign policy; a little less than three-fourths of respondents in both parties said yes. In 1947, 56 percent of Republicans and the exact same percentage of Democrats approved of aid to Greece to prevent a Communist takeover there.

Similar agreement characterized postwar policy toward Asia. About the same percentage of Democrats and Republicans supported aid to Taiwan in July 1950 and opposed sending U.S. troops to Indochina in May 1954. As one might expect, more Republicans than Democrats were critical of Truman's conduct of the Korean war. But Holsti argues that these divisions, like others, eventually subsided.

What is perhaps most striking about these data to the contemporary observer is that the foreign policy consensus held throughout the Vietnam war. "The absence of strong partisan cleavages," writes Holsti, "extended into the early years of the Vietnam war, as majorities within both parties expressed strong support for the Johnson administration's policies." Another student of public opinion, Sidney Verba of Harvard University, has found that partisan identification did not factor heavily into a person's view of Vietnam even after the war became controversial.

Leaving Vietnam was also a bipartisan enterprise. It was a Republican president who began negotiations to end the war and supervised the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam. That withdrawal was complete when, in June 1973, Congress passed—by a bipartisan, veto-proof majority—the Case-Church amendment forbidding any further American involvement in southeast Asia. When the North Vietnamese launched the final conquest of South Vietnam in March 1975, it had been more than two years since an American had died in combat in Vietnam and more than a year since the U.S. Air Force's last bombing raids over Cambodia. At no time during this bloody extrication did partisan divergences in public opinion emerge comparable to those that would appear within a few decades.

Looking back, it seems that American withdrawal from Vietnam did more to spur partisan disagreement on foreign policy than the war itself. The 1976 adoption of the "morality in foreign policy" plank of the Republican party platform and the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan apparently hastened the divergence. Asked in March 1982 about Reagan's military buildup, 43 percent of Democrats said the defense budget was "too much" and 16 percent thought it was "too little." (Close to a third thought it "about right.") By January 1985, 60 percent of Democrats thought Reagan's defense budgets were "too much"; only 7 percent thought they were "too little"; 27 percent thought they were "about right."

Republicans were far more supportive of Reagan's defense spending. Twenty-seven percent of Republicans said in 1982 that the defense budget was "too little." Forty-six percent thought it was about right. Only 18 percent thought it was "too much." By 1985, there were more Republicans (29 percent) who thought Reagan was spending "too much" on defense. But the great majority said the president's spending priorities were either "about right" (49 percent) or "too little" (15 percent).

In October 1983 almost two-thirds of Democrats thought it was a mistake to send the Marines to Leba-

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non; less than 30 percent thought it was not a mistake. A majority of Republicans (53 percent) thought deploying the Marines was not a mistake; 36 percent of Republicans thought it was. In May 1985, almost two thirds (65 percent) of Republicans approved of a trade embargo against the hard-left Sandinista regime in Nicaragua; just 16 percent disapproved. By contrast, 58 percent of Democrats disapproved of an embargo, with only about a quarter approving. In March 1986, Republicans were split, 44 percent to 44 percent, on military aid to the contras. There was no such split among Democrats. They were opposed to such a policy, 60 percent to 29 percent.

The Reagan era included acrimonious debates over missile deployment, a nuclear freeze, the bombing of Libya and intervention in Grenada, aid to the contras and Central America policy in general, missile defense, and moralistic rhetoric in foreign policy. Yet the more substantial and interesting partisan divergences occurred during the presidency of Reagan's successor, George H.W. Bush. In one sense, this might be unexpected. In many respects Bush and his advisers repudiated Reaganite foreign policy in favor of a classic "realist" approach to the world. But on the question of force—specifically, the use of force to eject Saddam Hussein's army from Kuwait—Democrats and Republicans still held widely divergent views.

Overall, of course, the public favored the Bush administration's policies toward Saddam. But Holsti, in a survey of Gallup data from before, during, and after Operation Desert Storm, found "rather substantial partisan differences" over the military deployment to Saudi Arabia and subsequent invasion of Iraq. On many questions, the typical divergence between Republican and Democratic opinion was somewhere around 20 percentage points. In fact Holsti found "only three" Gallup questions that "failed to yield significant differences." Two of these questions were related to the use of tactical nuclear weapons against Iraq; the third asked respondents whether peace protests ought to be banned during the conduct of the war.

On the most basic question, however—whether Saddam's army should be forcibly ejected from Kuwait—Republicans and Democrats disagreed by substantial margins. And the split in partisan public opinion was echoed in the actions of partisan leaders. One hundred and seventy-nine Democratic representatives voted against the joint resolution providing Bush the authority to use force and confront Saddam. Only three House Republicans voted with them. (Eighty-six Democrats and 164 Republicans voted for the joint resolution.) The split was more pronounced in the Senate, where only 10 Democrats voted to grant Bush authority; 45 Democrats voted against. All Senate Republicans except 2 voted for the joint resolution.

In 1992, one of the Senate Democrats who had voted for the joint resolution, Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee, was chosen by the Democratic governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton, to be his vice presidential candidate, mainly for considerations of foreign policy. Clinton and Gore's subsequent victory over George H.W. Bush and Dan Quayle brought a new instability to public opinion on foreign policy. Republicans were for a while reluctant to support Clinton's interventions when they thought the "national interest" was not at stake. The most drastic partisan divergence can be seen in Gallup polling on the presence of U.S. troops in Bosnia in 1995. More than two thirds (67 percent) of Republicans in the Gallup poll disapproved of a U.S. presence in Bosnia, while only 37 percent of Democrats disapproved. A majority of Democrats (57 percent) approved of the U.S. presence, while only 30 percent of Republicans approved as well.

But these percentages changed over time. Though he was often reluctant to do so, and could be said to have just as often pursued his goals half-heartedly, President Clinton deployed American power with some frequency. And he was able to keep most Democrats with him. As a result, by the time of the 1999 Kosovo war, 73 percent of Democrats favored the inclusion of U.S. ground troops in a Kosovo peacekeeping force. By this time, too, Republicans had rediscovered their affinity for the use of American arms abroad. A majority of them (57 percent) favored sending ground forces to Kosovo.

In a time of (apparent) peace and prosperity, it is perhaps unsurprising that Americans would turn inward and the power party would wane in influence. Nor should it be surprising that the Republican presidential nominee in 2000, George W. Bush, would respond to the new currents in his party and country by pledging to limit American commitments abroad and to conduct a foreign policy befitting a "humble" nation. Such a stance toward the world would be another casualty of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, however. In the days that followed, Bush declared war on terror and began planning war against the Taliban. And he enjoyed bipartisan support for these policies. A new consensus behind an assertive foreign policy to combat terror seemed possible and perhaps even likely. But it was not to be.

The Present

Earlier this year, Gary C. Jacobson of the University of California at San Diego published *A Divider, Not a Uniter*. The book deserved more attention than it received. George W. Bush, Jacobson argues persuasively, has become the "most divisive and polarizing president in the more than 50 years that public opinion

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polls have regularly measured citizens' assessments of presidents." And this is clearest when you look at the signature policy of Bush's administration: ending Saddam Hussein's regime and seeking to create a stable, democratically elected government in Iraq.

Jacobson found that, from the beginning of the debate over what to do about Saddam Hussein, the two parties held different views. As the United States moved closer to invading Iraq, the percentage of Republicans who said the "United States needs to act now, even without support of its allies," went from 34 percent in the late summer and fall of 2002 to 58 percent in February 2003. Yet over the same time period the percentage of Democrats who held this view basically stayed the same—20 percent to 22 percent. For Democrats, the importance of acting multilaterally was paramount. "Even when they believed that regime change in Iraq was imperative," Jacobson concludes, "most Democrats and independents remained reluctant to resort to force and opposed to unilateral action on the part of the United States."

As the hour of reckoning neared, the divisions between the parties grew. As the war plan moved forward, "partisan divisions on its wisdom and necessity were substantial, on the order of 35 to 40 percentage points." Such a divergence was unprecedented. Never had such a divide been recorded since public opinion researchers turned to foreign policy questions in the aftermath of World War II. Historically, writes Jacobson, the gap "is lowest in the most controversial of these engagements, Vietnam, averaging only 5 percentage points." In Jacobson's analysis, Republican and Democratic views drew closer once the war began. Majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and independents supported the action through the first two months of the war. Then, sometime during May and June 2003, the trendline of Democratic support fell below 50 percent. It never recovered. Support for the war among independents trended above 50 percent until sometime between January and March 2004. It, too, never recovered. During all this time, however, the trendline in Republican support never sank below 75 percent.

The partisan gap on support for the Iraq war, Jacobson goes on, "reaches an average of about 63 percentage points in the last quarter of 2004 before narrowing a bit to an average of about 58 percent during 2005." He found that the most radical divergence occurred in an October 2004 *Los Angeles Times* poll question that asked "whether Bush had made the right decision to go to war, in light of the CIA's report that Saddam had no WMD and no active program to produce them." Ninety percent of the Republicans who answered this question said the war remained the right decision. Ten percent of Democrats agreed.

More than anything else, the 2004 presidential election was about the war. National Election Survey data show that a person's vote was inextricably tied to whether he thought the war in Iraq had or had not been worth the cost. "In total," Jacobson continues, "89 percent of Democrats and 82 percent of Republicans and independents" cast votes consonant with their stance on the war. The polarization trend continued throughout the 2006 election campaign. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in early November 2006 found that 77 percent of Republicans still agreed that the United States "made the right decision" to use military force against Iraq. Just 20 percent of Democrats agreed that it was the right decision.

A 2003 Pew survey recorded the largest partisan gap the organization had ever measured on the question of whether "the best way to achieve peace is through military strength."

Perhaps most strikingly, some 61 percent of Republicans in the November Pew survey thought the U.S. military effort in Iraq was going "very/fairly well." By contrast, 16 percent of Democrats felt the effort was going "very/fairly well." Instead, 81 percent of Democrats said the war was going "not too/at all well." Yet, at a time when insurgents were spiking the number of attacks against Coalition forces, 35 percent of Republicans shared the majority Democratic assessment. Such a disparity had been apparent for some time, of course. What the Pew data make clear is that the historic Democratic gains in the midterm elections are the result of a collapse in support for the war among independents, whose views, at least for now, are far more consonant with those of Democrats than Republicans.

It is worth examining, then, the characteristics of the peace party and the power party, and how their more general beliefs influence each party's views on specific policy questions. What separates the two are their views of the importance of military superiority to national power and the proper use of American arms abroad. A 2003 Pew survey recorded the largest partisan gap the organization had ever measured on the question of whether "the best way to achieve peace is through military strength." Sixty-nine percent of Republicans agreed with this statement; only 44 percent of Democrats did the same.

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More recently, Robert Shapiro and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon of Columbia University, in a survey of Chicago Council on Foreign Relations data, found "a noticeable divergence from 1998 to 2004 in the opinions of Republicans and Democrats, with Democrats increasingly less likely to say maintaining U.S. military power is a 'very important goal' of American foreign policy." The 2006 Transatlantic Trends survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund found that more than 80 percent of Democrats said they agreed either "strongly" or "somewhat" with the idea that "economic power is more important in world affairs than military power." The divergence from Republicans was 18 percentage points.

That Democrats deemphasize military power in general leads them to adopt certain policies. Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon found that the partisan difference on expanding defense spending increased by 10 percentage points between 1998 and 2004. (In 2004, 44 percent of Republicans wanted to expand the defense budget versus 20 percent of Democrats.) They "see a widening partisan divergence along the ideological lines of the Bush administration." But these trends are probably bigger than Bush. After all, there were clear divergences during the Clinton administration as well.

And because the peace party wishes to scale back domestic military spending, it is unsurprising it would also want to reduce foreign military aid. "Compared to Republicans," write Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon, "Democrats have been more supportive of cutting back military aid to other nations." They found that the difference in opinion among Democrats and Republicans on this question doubled between 1998 and 2004, with substantial majorities of Democrats supporting cuts in military aid. As America cuts back on its financial commitments abroad, so, too, should it reduce the number of its military bases on foreign soil. In 2004 large majorities of Republicans supported the American base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba; substantially less than a majority of Democrats felt the same way. In 2004, 57 percent of Republicans supported bases in Afghanistan; 44 percent of Democrats felt the same way.

The peace party is logically consistent. If military power is less important than certain forms of "soft" power, then it ought to be deployed less. And this is especially the case for "preemptive" war. A 2003 Pew survey found that whereas more than 80 percent of Republicans thought preemptive wars are "often" or "sometimes" justified, substantially fewer of Democrats, 52 percent, shared those same opinions. But reluctance to use deadly force is not limited to preemptive or preventive conflicts. The German Marshall Fund's 2006 Transatlantic Trends poll asked whether, "under some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice." Sixty-three percent of Republicans agreed "strongly" with this sentiment, as did 30 percent of Democrats. In the peace party, war is the final, and perhaps forbidden, option.

In November 2005 the MIT Public Opinion Research Lab conducted a more specific survey. The data are revealing. One question asked whether the United States had made a mistake in invading Afghanistan in October 2001. Ninety-four percent of Republicans said the policy of regime change in Afghanistan had *not* been a mistake. Only 59 percent of Democrats agreed. In the MIT survey, only 4 percent of Democrats thought the war in Iraq had been worth fighting. Republicans were more likely than Democrats to support the use of U.S. combat troops, and by greater margins. This was the case when respondents were asked whether they would approve of using U.S. troops to protect oil supplies (10 percent of Democrats said yes versus 41 percent of Republicans), to spread democracy (7 percent versus 53 percent), to destroy a terrorist base (57 percent versus 95 percent), to intervene in a humanitarian disaster such as a genocide or civil war (56 percent versus 61 percent), and to protect American allies under attack (76 percent versus 92 percent). In only one area did more Democrats than Republicans support the use of troops: helping the United Nations "uphold international law" (71 percent versus 36 percent).

Even more striking is the apparent polarization on democracy promotion. The 2006 Transatlantic Trends survey asked whether the European Union and the United States should help establish democracy in other countries. Sixty-four percent of Republicans said they should; 35 percent of Democrats agreed. The pollsters told respondents to imagine an authoritarian regime in which there is no political or religious freedom. They asked whether the United States and the European Union should take certain actions with regard to such a regime. Asked whether they would support Europe and the United States sending military forces to remove the authoritarian regime, 65 percent of Democrats said they would *not* support such a policy; 37 percent of Republicans said they would not do so.

It was the expectation of many of the political scientists with whom I spoke that these partisan divergences would fade as the security situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate and Bush's popularity imploded. The most recent data suggest, however, that this has not happened. There has been no convergence in opinion. The partisan divisions have not healed. While there are obviously elements of power in the peace party and vice versa, a recent Pew report went so far as to say that the two parties now "see different realities."

The Future

The underlying causes of foreign policy polarization are difficult to unravel. Both Gary Jacobson and Walter Russell Mead point to the emergence

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within the Republican party of a distinctive, ideological foreign policy with ties to religious conservatism. In a 2003 article in the *Public Interest* entitled "Defining the 'Peace Party,'" James Q. Wilson and Karlyn Bowman wrote that ideology plays a role, but they also pointed to widespread pacifist and pseudo-isolationist attitudes among (overwhelmingly Democratic) black voters. No doubt the political developments of the 1970s—including the activist takeover of the Democratic primary process, which led to the nomination of George McGovern in 1972; the foreign policy failures of the Carter administration; and the rise of a Reagan-Helms moralist foreign policy in the Republican party—played a key role. That foreign policy polarization is tied to the larger phenomenon of political polarization is undeniable—but that does not make it any less surprising to political scientists. They seem genuinely puzzled at these data. And more than a little worried. The division in American politics between the peace party and the power party may complicate or even prevent the "implementation of a steady, resolute foreign policy and national security strategy" in a time of great danger, write William Galston and Pietro Nivola in *Red and Blue Nation? Volume One: Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics* (Brookings).

Consider Iran. In the 2006 Transatlantic Trends study, 23 percent of Democrats surveyed said that the United States should "accept that Iran could acquire nuclear weapons." Nine percent of Republicans registered a similar opinion. When asked whether the allies—the United States and the E.U.—ought to take military action against Iran to stop the mullahs from acquiring nuclear arms, only 41 percent of Democrats agreed. Seventy percent of Republicans supported a military strike. And when asked who could best handle the issue of Iran's nuclear program, only 19 percent of Democrats said the United States, versus more than a third of Republicans.

What lies at the bottom of the great chasm dividing the peace party from the power party? One suspects it is differing attitudes toward American exceptionalism, conflicting opinions on America's goodness and greatness. In 2004 the pollster Scott Rasmussen asked respondents whether America is "generally fair and decent." Eighty-three percent of respondents planning to vote for George W. Bush agreed with that sentiment; only 46 percent of those planning to vote for John Kerry thought so. Rasmussen also asked whether respondents thought the world would be better off if other nations were more like the United States. The data were similar: Eighty-one percent of those planning to vote for Bush thought so; just 48 percent of Kerry voters agreed. When Rasmussen asked the "fair and decent" question again in November 2006, he found similar results.

In 2003, Pew asked respondents whether they agreed with the statement that "I am very patriotic." As you might expect, almost everyone who is asked this question says "yes." But a simple "yes" is not the only option. Seventy-one percent of Republicans said they "agreed completely" with this statement, while less than a majority of Democrats (48 percent) said their agreement was "complete."

One's views of America correlate strongly with one's views of American power. In 2004 Pew asked whether the United States should be the "'single leader' or 'most active' nation" in the world. Fifty-four percent of Republicans agreed that America should be one or the other. Only 29 percent of Democrats shared that opinion—a 9 percentage point decline, Pew found, since the same question had been asked in 2001. Similarly, in 2004, Pew asked whether U.S. "wrongdoing" might have "motivated" the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Fifty-one percent of Democrats—and 67 percent of liberal Democrats—agreed with that sentiment, compared with only 17 percent of Republicans.

It stands to reason that if you think American power is not generally a force for good in the world, you will be less eager to deploy that power than others.

It stands to reason that if you think American power is not generally a force for good in the world, you will be less eager to deploy that power than others. But what happens when the peace party holds power of its own and faces a world in which illiberalism is on the march? What happens when the power party faces a revolt in its own ranks? What does it mean when the party of the social elite identifies more closely with those who wish to constrain American power than with those who wish to use it? Will an American failure in Iraq discredit the power party, just as the urban riots and other social dislocations of the late 1960s discredited the party of the Great Society?

Contingent, indeterminate, and unpredictable, the course of American politics—and of world politics—is notoriously difficult to predict. No one knows what wonderful and terrible events abroad will influence politics at home. What we do know is that partisans will see these events through different eyes and respond to them in vastly different ways. The divide between the peace party and power party is real. It is sizable. And it will remain a prominent feature on the American political landscape for some time to come. ♦

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Holland's Post-Secular Future

Christianity is dead. Long live Christianity!

By Joshua Livestro

Amsterdam

When the "corporate prayer" movement first started in 1996, few people in Holland took any notice. Why should they have done so? After all, Holland's manifest destiny was to become a fully secularized country, in which prayer was considered at best an irrational but harmless pastime. That was then. Cue forward to 2006, when prayer in the workplace is fast becoming a universally accepted phenomenon. More than 100 companies participate. Government ministries, universities, multinational companies like Philips, KLM, and ABN AMRO—all allow groups of employees to organize regular prayer meetings at their premises. Trade unions have even started lobbying the government for recognition of workers' right to prayer in the workplace.

The idea that secularization is the irreversible wave of the future is still the conventional wisdom in intellectual circles here. They would be bemused, to say the least, at a Dutch relapse into religiosity. But as the authors of a recently published study called *De Toekomst van God* (The Future of God) point out, organized prayer in the workplace is just one among several pieces of evidence suggesting that Holland is on the threshold of a new era—one we might call the age of "post-secularization." In their book, Adjiedj Bakas, a professional trend-watcher, and Minne Buwalda, a journalist, argue that Holland is experiencing a fundamental shift in religious orientation: "Throughout Western Europe, and also in Holland, liberal Protestantism is in its death throes. It will be replaced by a new orthodoxy."

According to Bakas and Buwalda, God is back in Europe's most notoriously liberal country. Or rather: The Dutch are moving back to God. It seems an implausible hypothesis. After all, Europe was supposed to have entered the realm of post-Christianity, to use C.S. Lewis's term—a state of eternal unbelief from which there is no return. And yet, Bakas and Buwalda claim, the Dutch are turning back. Take the almost unnoticed reintroduction of crucifixes and other religious artifacts into the classrooms of Catholic schools throughout the country. Years of gradual but seemingly unstoppable secularization have given way to a reaffirmation of old religious identities. The change is also starting to affect the attitudes of pupils at these schools. In a recent newspaper interview, a head teacher at a Catholic secondary school in Rotterdam observed, "For years, pupils were embarrassed about attending Mass. Now, they volunteer to read poems or prayers, and the auditorium is packed."

There's also the remarkable critical and commercial success of a number of openly Christian writers. Holland's most prestigious literary prizes were awarded in 2005 to books dealing in a sympathetic way with Christian issues of faith and redemption. The Libris Literatuur Prize went to the Catholic author Willem Jan Otten for his *Specht en zoon* (Specht and son) while the AKO Literature Prize was awarded to Calvinist Jan Siebelink's *Knielen op een bed violen* (Kneeling on a Bed of Violets). Siebelink's novel sold nearly 350,000 copies in its first year, making it the single bestselling Dutch-language book of the past decade—apart, that is, from a new Bible translation published in 2004, which sold more than half a million copies (in a population of 16 million people).

The success in the Netherlands of the so-called Alpha Course program—a sort of Christianity 101 for beginners—is another case in point. The Alpha formula, first developed at Holy Trinity Brompton in London, aims to provide small groups of interested people with an introduction to Christianity through a series of meals-with-discussion evenings. Since its inception in 1997, 120,000 people have taken the Dutch version of the course. The number of related courses is growing by around one hundred a year. Prison Alpha, Business Alpha, Student Alpha, Youth Alpha, and more recently the Alpha Marriage Course: Collectively, they seem to have struck a chord in Holland's secular society. Jan Bakker, national coordinator of Alpha Holland, admits he is as surprised as anyone about the

Joshua Livestro is a columnist for Holland's biggest selling newspaper, De Telegraaf, *and the Dutch edition of* Reader's Digest.

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success of the program: "There are still those who laugh at Christianity. But there's a growing group, most of them young people, who are genuinely interested, for whom this is all completely new."

There's statistical evidence to back up the "new orthodoxy" hypothesis. First of all, there's the undeniable fact of the continued decline and fall of the old liberal religious order. Worst hit are the mainstream Protestant churches, whose membership declined from 23 percent of the population in the late 1950s to 6 percent today. According to government estimates, by 2020 this figure will have dwindled to a mere 2 percent. The decline of liberal Protestantism has been matched by that of liberal Catholicism. The once-powerful Catholic Eighth of May group—a liberation theology movement born out of a mass meeting on May 8, 1985, to protest against Pope John Paul II's visit to the Netherlands—was disbanded in November 2003 because of lack of interest among its rapidly declining membership. More broadly, aging Catholic congregations mean that Roman Catholicism, too, will likely face another decade or so of declining membership. From 42 percent of the population in 1958 and 17 percent today, membership could fall to as low as 10 percent before leveling off around 2020.

In spite of this decline of the old religious establishment, however, the century-long wave of secularization seems to have crested, and may even have begun to recede. The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) finds that the number of self-described Christians stopped declining as early as the beginning of the 1990s. Among the under-20s, the number has started to increase in recent years. If the CBS figures are to be believed, in 2005 a small majority of the Dutch population (52 percent) still called itself Christian. The figures are disputed, however, by another major government research body, the Social and Cultural Planning Agency (SCP). The SCP uses a stricter definition of religiosity, allowing only those who not only describe themselves as Christians but also belong to a particular church to be counted as "real" Christians. The others, the so-called "fringe Christians," are not attached to a particular church and are excluded from the official head count. Even by the SCP's strict standards, Christians still form a 40 percent plurality among the wider population. Much like the CBS statistic, the SCP's 40 percent figure hasn't changed since the early 1990s.

From both sets of figures, it seems clear that something of a high-water mark for secularization in Holland was set in the last decade. What is less clear is what is happening now and what happens next. If 40-50 percent of the population are Christian, yet only half of these are in traditional churches, Protestant or Catholic, what is going on with religion in Holland?

The reason the Christian population of Holland has stopped shrinking and is likely to avoid further decline is a phenomenon that until now has been largely overlooked by commentators on Dutch politics and society: Christian immigration. Analysts usually focus on the one million Muslim immigrants and their offspring who have made the Netherlands their home since the early 1950s. But in the past decade, Muslim immigration has been overtaken by a larger stream of immigrants, namely Christians from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. An SCP estimate puts the number of Christian immigrants in Holland at around 700,000—and rising fast. Recent immigration reports suggest that for every new Muslim moving to Holland, there are at least two new Christian immigrants.

They meet in churches like the one led by Rev. Stanley Hofwijks. Shortly after arriving from Suriname in the mid-1970s, Hofwijks became the pastor of a small Amsterdam-based charismatic Christian community of just under 40 members. The congregation met in a room in a local Dutch Reformed Church, which at the time still counted around a thousand members. They are long gone. The church building now belongs to Hofwijks's evangelical church, Maranatha Ministries, which numbers some 1,800 members. Hofwijks anticipates his congregation will eventually outgrow the building. He is already looking at buying and converting an old warehouse that would hold around 2,000.

Hofwijks is not surprised by the explosive growth of his congregation: "If you look closely, you'll see that only the traditional churches are affected by secularization. Almost all nontraditional churches are growing, and growing strongly. The reason is simple: While the message stays the same, the methods change to suit the times. If people want it, we'll have flags, loud music, people jumping up and down in the pews, even hip-hop. But Jesus remains the same as he was 2,000 years ago. The Word never changes." His main challenge is not secularization but increased competition from other immigrant churches. Amsterdam already counts around 170 immigrant church communities, and new ones are founded every month. Hofwijks doesn't seem to mind: "Competition is good, it keeps you humble. It also keeps you focused on what really matters: following God, being close to Him."

As Hofwijks leans back in his chair, the building starts to shake to the sound of loudspeakers bellowing 100-decibel praises to the Almighty: "COME, NOW IS THE TIME TO WORSHIP!!" It's the start of a youth service in the church's main hall. Around 150 young people have gathered to spend their Friday evening in praise and prayer. They're part of another recent Christian phenomenon: the so-called youth churches, congregations of under-30s who gather in school buildings or sports halls to worship God, sometimes

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in rather unorthodox ways ("Skateboarding for Christ").

The doyen of the Dutch youth churches movement is Henk Jan Kamsteeg. He is a member of the pastoral team ("Wow, that sounds old-fashioned! Why not call me an initiator, or a group leader?") at the Heartbeat youth church, founded three years ago in the medieval market town of Amersfoort, about 40 miles east of Amsterdam. The church, which has a congregation of around 1,200, meets once a month in a Christian cultural center in one of the town's modern suburbs. Kamsteeg witnessed firsthand a phenomenon that, according to the old secularization thesis, was virtually unheard of: large numbers of young people deciding of their own free will to attend church services—and coming back for more. When he announced the first service three years ago, he hired a hall that seated a maximum of 500 people. On the night, 850 turned up—though nothing special had been done to advertise the event. "I've long since ceased to be amazed about the amount of interest in youth churches," says Kamsteeg. "Twelve-hundred people showing up, two services a night, you almost take it for granted. But deep down I still know how remarkable it really is."

Since the founding of the first Dutch youth churches in 2001, their numbers have risen significantly—from 45 churches serving around 10,000 young people in 2003 to 88 serving more than 20,000 in 2005. In a way, these youth churches are the tip of another iceberg on the path of the *SS Secularization*. The number of churchgoing Christians is still dropping among all other age groups, but among the under-20s it is rising again, and by a significant margin. A CBS survey noted that between 2003 and 2004, church attendance among under-20s rose seemingly inexplicably, from 9 percent to 14 percent. As expected, the survey prompted a skeptical response from social commentators. Not from the SCP, however: In a recent report it basically confirmed the CBS's findings, observing that "it is noticeable that since 1997, the secularization curve among 16 to 30-year-olds has leveled off. In the last few years, it even seems to be declining."

Apart from being a herald of potential change from secular to post-secular society, youth churches are also an indicator of another significant development, namely the move away from the church of bricks and mortar to a less clearly recognizable, more informal setting. Youth churches seem to meet anywhere but in traditional church buildings: cultural centers, sports halls, school assembly rooms, parking lots, even in night clubs. The idea is that something that less resembles a traditional church might prove more welcoming to potential new believers. It is perhaps also an attempt by this new movement to put distance between itself and mainstream churches who, in the eyes of many young Christians, represent the failure of the "old approach." According to Kamsteeg, if Christianity in Holland is to have a future, it has to develop a new way of doing things, possibly also in new locations: "Young people are genuinely interested in Christ. They're just not into two-hour sermons, dreary music, and drafty old buildings." The ultimate consequence of this approach is yet another new phenomenon: that of the house churches.

In his living room in the old university town of Leiden, Kees Westhuis, 41, explains the essence of the house church idea: "We don't want to *go* to church, we want to *be* a church." Westhuis was raised in the Dutch Reformed tradition, but found himself increasingly frustrated with the worldly concerns of his local church: "During one meeting of the church elders, debate turned to the cost of refurbishing the church buildings. I found myself wondering whether, instead of spending all this money on bricks and mortar, we wouldn't be better off spending it on evangelizing in the community."

The answer to Westhuis's concerns came to him in the form of a book that has inspired the founding of most house churches in the Netherlands: German author Wolfgang Simson's *Houses that Change the World* (first published as *Häuser, die Welt verändern* in 1999). The most appealing aspect of the house church, according to Westhuis, is its simplicity. At its core, the house church is based on the practice of the earliest Christian communities of the first century: small groups of people meeting in each other's houses, sharing a meal and worshipping God. Westhuis: "The idea is that you don't just share a meal once a week, you actually share your lives. It's a radical departure from modern life, which leaves most people feeling increasingly lonely."

The Dutch house church movement, according to recent studies, has witnessed remarkable growth over the past decade or so: from a mere handful in the 1970s to just under 20 in 1990 to around 100 in 2000, and continuing upwards since then. Henk Vink runs a website offering support and facilities to budding home churches. He estimates that most of Holland's 200 cities now have at least one home church in them. The first time Vink realized something big was happening was when he organized a series of regional conferences for people interested in house churches. He'd expected small groups of maybe 10 people per meeting; instead more than 50 people showed up at each of the 12 regional meetings: "It's evidence of a growing spiritual hunger in society. People are really searching for truth."

He may well be right. The question, though, is whether Christianity is best placed to profit from this development. For better or for worse, Dutch Christianity is now largely an underground phenomenon. If an average Dutchman has any picture of Christianity,

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it is of empty pews and derelict church buildings. Dutch Christians have increasingly withdrawn from the public sphere, either voluntarily—as in the case of the house churches and the youth church movement—or because they lack the confidence to speak publicly about their faith to an unbelieving audience. If they do enter the public sphere, as in the case of the Alpha course, they do so under a neutered, de-Christianized guise: not imposing their views, merely inviting people to come along, have a meal, and ask any questions they like. They may be successful, but a city upon a hill they are not—more like a city in wartime, its lights hidden behind thick dark curtains. Any genuine seeker might stumble past it without knowing it was even there.

What that seeker will find, and very visibly, is Islam. While Dutch Christianity is making the move from church buildings to living rooms, sports centers, and factory halls, Dutch Islam is moving in the opposite direction. At the Kostverlorenvaart in the Amsterdam suburb of De Baarsjes, the foundations are being laid for a new mosque, with a 110-foot-high dome and 140-foot-high minarets. "We don't want to pray in basements and school buildings anymore. We want a proper mosque," is how Fatih Dag explains the idea behind this project. Dag is chairman of the board of the local Aya Sofia Mosque. He says he understands local objections to the scale of the project: "Of course, if I were living in Turkey and people wanted a big new church next to my house, I might object too. But the fact is that we are here, and we're here to stay. And we want a place to worship." Indeed, in all major towns in Holland, building projects are under way for the construction of supersized mosques.

They're symbols of Dutch Islam's remarkable growth over the past 30 years, from less than 1 percent of the population in 1970 to 6 percent today. According to SCP predictions, that growth is set to continue to around 7.5 percent in 2020—a significant increase, to be sure, but nowhere near the apocalyptic figures predicted by those who fear Holland will become a majority Islamic country by the end of the 21st century. One reason it won't is that Islam, at least in its Dutch variant, is not a proselytizing faith. When asked about the importance of proselytizing, Dag volunteered that, on his list of priorities, trying to convert the indigenous Dutch population comes "just about last." Even the most optimistic estimates of Dutch Muslim organizations put the number of converts to Islam at no more than a few hundred a year. With immigration from Islamic countries grinding to a halt and birth rates among the Muslim community further approximating average Dutch birthrates with each new generation, it seems unlikely to say the least that visions of a caliphate in Holland will come to pass in this century—or the next, for that matter.

Since they don't seem to be interested in spreading the good news of Muhammad, the main priority of the Islamic communities in Holland will be to fight off the twin challenges of apathy and apostasy. Apathy is not yet a challenge in a community that defines Islam largely in cultural rather than religious terms. But once the third and fourth generations of offspring of the original immigrants start to replace the first generation, these cultural ties will start to lose some of their binding force. At the same time, it's far from clear that Dutch Islam will be able to keep religious liberalism at bay indefinitely. With government sponsorship—and the accompanying demands of gender neutrality—of university-based imam training courses about to become a reality, the day is not far off when the first feminist and gay imams will start preaching in mosques in Holland. There is no reason to assume Islam will be any better placed to deal with this liberal onslaught than mainstream Christianity was in the 1950s and '60s.

In the meantime, Islam is already finding itself in a difficult position fighting off another threat, namely that of apostasy. Traditional approaches—honor killings and *fatwas*—have caused outrage among Holland's general public and political class. That doesn't mean these intimidation tactics won't be effective in the short term—in a recent article in a Dutch political magazine about Islamic converts to Christianity, most sources would talk only on condition of anonymity. But in the long term, they won't work if they don't have the full force of the law behind them (as they do in most Islamic countries). Inevitably, Christian evangelists will try to develop ways of communicating with the Islamic community with a view to converting its members. At Alpha Course Netherlands, they're already receiving requests for Alpha course material specifically aimed at an Islamic audience. Alpha Netherlands coordinator Jan Bakker was quick to stress that there is no formal plan to develop such material. But, he added, "we never really have a pre-prepared plan for anything. We just wait to see where God wants us to move. If this is one direction He wants us to take, then we'll take it."

It seems unlikely, then, that Dutch Islam will prove to be a serious long-term competitor with Christianity. The latter has little to fear from a rival that refuses to proselytize and has yet to go through the refining fire of the struggle with religious liberalism. Christians may even profit from their encounter with Islam. Muslims may not seek to convert, but unlike their Christian counterparts, they do speak confidently in public about their faith. And through their building projects, they also show that God can still be a very visible presence in the community. If Dutch Christians want to learn again what it means not to hide your light under a bushel, they could do worse than look at their Islamic neighbors. ♦

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Oliver Goldsmith, James Boswell, Samuel Johnson

Dr. Johnson Speaks

On language, English words, and life

BY JACK LYNCH

Samuel Johnson died 222 years ago, and in all that time there has been surprisingly little agreement about what he thought about many important questions.

He wrote about politics: Some see him as a diehard conservative, others as an advocate for the policies of the modern left. He wrote about empire: Some see him as a devoted imperialist, others as an enemy of imperial expansion. He wrote about economics: Some see him as a champion of modern capitalism, others as an opponent of the free market. He wrote about the sexes: Some see him as a determined misogynist, others as the most devoted feminist thinker of his day.

Why so little agreement after so many years? It's not for lack of material. Johnson's published writings fill dozens of volumes: A play, a few short fictions, a travel book, a stack of political pamphlets, dozens of poems, more than 50 biographies, several hundred essays, a complete annotated edition of the works of Shakespeare, and tens of thousands of definitions in his great *Dictionary*. And then there are the five fat volumes of his letters and, most famously, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, recording more than a thousand pages of his conversation. Perhaps no writer in English is better documented.

Johnson on the English Language
Vol. 18, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson
Edited by Gwin J. Kolb and Robert DeMaria
Yale, 560 pp., $90

It's not for lack of attention. In the years since his death, scholars have been poring over those dozens of volumes and trying to make sense of their author. Johnson has been the subject of hundreds of books and thousands of articles. Each year sees another 150 or so titles in which he is chronicled, celebrated, abused, psychoanalyzed, and deconstructed. He's a mainstay of English literature surveys, of graduate seminars, and of professional conferences. He remains a source of fascination for both professors and journalists; he is the subject of both dissertations and books of Christian devotion.

It's certainly not because he was hesitant to speak his mind. Johnson, famously blunt in both his writing and his conversation, loved controversy. Sugarcoating was not for him. When Boswell tried to defend a woman who cheated on her husband, Johnson would have none of it: "The woman's a whore," he insisted, "and there's an end on't." In political disputes he could be brutal. He dismissed the rebellious American colonists as "Rascals—Robbers—Pirates," who "ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging." He went so far as to declare that he was

Jack Lynch is associate professor of English at Rutgers. His edition of selections from Dr. Johnson's Dictionary *has just been issued in paperback.*

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"willing to love all mankind, *except an American*." Even literary masterpieces didn't escape his forceful criticism. Henry Fielding, one of England's greatest novelists, was "a blockhead." *Paradise Lost*, he said, "is one of the books which the reader admires and puts down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is." And even "Shakespeare never has six lines together without a fault."

Why, then, does Johnson remain so elusive? The real reason is that his mind is one of the richest and most complicated of his era, perhaps of any era. It's notoriously difficult to pin him down or to reduce him to sound bites. The subtlety and precision of his thought are both the reason people have been drawn to him for so many years and the reason they disagree even after all that careful reading. To pigeonhole him as "liberal" or "conservative," "imperialist" or "anti-imperialist," forces us to be very clear about what we mean by those words, because he's almost always too complicated to fit neatly into any of our categories.

The English language is where Johnson did some of his most important work, and debates about the significance of that work continue to this day. His famous *Dictionary of the English Language* appeared in two huge volumes in 1755. Contrary to the popular myth, it was not the first English dictionary—Johnson had dozens of predecessors in English-language lexicography. In fact, he had few big ideas that can be called original, in his *Dictionary* or elsewhere. There's no Johnsonian theorem, no Johnsonian method, no Johnsonian discovery. As a poet he didn't invent a Johnsonian stanza; as a political writer he didn't develop a Johnsonian system. His friend Adam Smith laid the foundations for modern economic thought; his enemy David Hume turned philosophy on its head; his acquaintance Benjamin Franklin was one of the most prolific inventors in history. Johnson, on the other hand, wasn't a "first" in anything important, including his *Dictionary*.

As two scholars put it 50 years ago, "Johnson, as lexicographer, asked no questions, gave no answers, and invented no techniques which were new to Europe."

What's important about Johnson's *Dictionary* isn't that it was the first, but that it was the best dictionary of its day, the most discerning and precise that had ever appeared, the one that gave more attention than ever before to teasing out minute discriminations of meaning. The earliest dictionaries covered only the "hard words"—terms like *adpugn* (fight against), *aconick* (poisonous), and *abligurition* (spending too much on food and drink). Consider Robert Cawdrey, whose *Table Alphabeticall* of 1604 deserves to be called the first English dictionary. He includes words like *calcinate* ("to make salt"), *calygraphie* ("fayre writing"), and *calliditie* ("craftines, or deceit") but can't be bothered with *call*, *cat*, or *catch*. While he defines *taciturnitie* ("silence or keeping counsaile") and *tangible* ("that may be touched"), he skips over a familiar word like *take*.

Other early dictionaries did the same. Edward Phillips's dictionary, *A New World of Words*, jumps from *tainct* to *takel*, Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* goes straight from *tainct* to *talaries*. Seventeenth-century lexicographers didn't see the point of defining words like *cat* or *take*. And the definitions they included were usually very limited. Here are some complete entries from Cawdrey's dictionary:

> distance, space betweene.
>
> division, parting or seperating.
>
> dulcimur, instrument.
>
> efficient, working, or accomplishing.
>
> election, choice.

And so on. Cawdrey's definitions were usually no more than synonyms, and not very precise ones at that. To be told a dulcimer is an instrument is of very little help. Is it a musical instrument? a scientific instrument? a legal instrument? If a musical instrument, do you blow on it, bang on it, or pluck its strings? Cawdrey doesn't say.

In the 18th century, lexicographers began paying more attention to common words. It's a development that shows a new degree of sophistication coming to the study of the language. John Kersey's *New English Dictionary*, for instance, appeared in 1702; it defines *take* this way: "to hold with one's Hand, to lay hold of"—a total of nine words. Benjamin Martin, the first English lexicographer to use numbered senses, covers 17 different senses of *take* in a total of 132 words. Nathan Bailey, Johnson's most important precursor, gave common English words more attention than most of his predecessors, but even he dispensed with all of his definitions of *take* in a mere 362 words.

Now turn to Johnson's *Dictionary*. His entries for *take*, with 133 numbered senses and 363 quotations, run to more than 8,000 words. He's careful to distinguish *taking medicine* from *taking revenge*, *taking one's way* from *taking one's time*. And his definitions are more precise than those of any of his predecessors. Many people think the hardest words to define are the obscure ones—words like *ruderary* or *fabaceous* or *anatiferous*. (For the curious: *ruderary* means "belonging to rubbish"; *fabaceous* means "having the nature of a bean"; *anatiferous* means "producing ducks.") But these inkhorn terms are in fact some of the easiest ones to define, because once you figure out the Latin or Greek roots, you've got your answer. But defining a word like *take* or *get* or *set* is a real challenge. No one had ever really attempted to solve these problems before Johnson, whose powerful intelligence qualified him to sort through all the subtle differences in senses.

The experience he gained from being a careful practical lexicographer also gave him insight into how language works in general, and his comments on language show a sensitivity that was unparalleled in his day, and has few rivals in our own. One of the perennial debates among people who discuss the language is whether it is the job of commentators to be *prescriptive* or *descriptive*. The prescriptivists tell you the way the language should be; the descriptivists tell you the way it is.

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The prescriptivists warn against splitting infinitives and insist that it's wrong to end sentences with prepositions; the descriptivists say such rules are artificial and old-fashioned, and a linguist should care only about the way real people speak and write. The two sides glower at each other across the pages of scholarly journals and editorial pages: The prescriptivists see themselves as champions of standards of propriety and their opponents as wild-eyed linguistic anarchists; the descriptivists see themselves as realists and their opponents as inflexible linguistic authoritarians. And many on both sides are eager to claim the authority of Johnson, the first great theorist of the English language, to support their cause.

So which camp is Johnson's? It should be no surprise that there's no consensus. Those who claim Johnson was a prescriptivist point to entries in his *Dictionary* like *ruse*, which Johnson says is "A French word neither elegant nor necessary," or *scomm*, "A word out of use, and unworthy of revival." The word *thro'* was "Contracted by barbarians from *through*," and *disannul* should "be rejected as ungrammatical and barbarous." Here Johnson seems to be delivering edicts, issuing verdicts on whether words should live or die.

Those who see him as a pioneer descriptivist, on the other hand, point to passages in the *Dictionary* like this: "It is not in our power to have recourse to any established laws of speech, but we must remark how the writers of former ages have used the same word"—in other words, the only guide to language is usage, not logic, not rules. He wrote that his job was not to "form, but register the language," not to "teach men how they should think, but relate how they have hitherto expressed their thoughts."

The only way to settle this question is through careful attention to Johnson's *Dictionary*, his great monument to the English language. Reading the entire work from cover to cover, though, is the work of months, even years. Johnson defines some 43,000 words, illustrating those words with around 115,000 quotations from great English authors, in a book that stretches to roughly three million words of text.

To put that in perspective, *Moby-Dick*, *War and Peace*, and the collected works of Shakespeare combined are just over half the length of Johnson's *Dictionary*. But if it's impractical to read the entire *Dictionary*, it's possible to read some of Johnson's most important theoretical statements about the nature of the English language. And the appearance of this definitive edition of Johnson's writings about the English language is a good opportunity to look at these questions anew.

The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson has been underway since the mid-1950s, and after half a century is finally nearing completion. When finished, it will be the first collected edition of Johnson's works since 1825; already it's a major scholarly achievement. Not all of the volumes, of course, are of equal interest outside the academy. Volume 17, for instance, is Johnson's translation of Jean Pierre de Crousaz's *Commentaire sur la traduction en vers de M. Abbé Du Resnel, de l'Essai de M. Pope sur l'homme*—hardly a title to make its way onto any best-seller list. But *Johnson on the English Language* (Vol. 18) deserves serious attention from a wide readership.

Even parts of this volume, it must be admitted, will be of interest mainly to specialists. The editors—Robert DeMaria, one of the most distinguished experts on Johnson, and the recently deceased Gwin J. Kolb, whose contributions to Johnsonian studies go back more than half-a-century—know Johnson's works and their contexts intimately. They trace many of his arguments to now-obscure 17th-century French and Italian linguists, and they spot Johnson's occasional lapses when he transcribes Anglo-Saxon. Things like this are useful to specialists but not to general readers. And even some of Johnson's own writings here—his "History of the English Language" and his "Grammar of the English Tongue"—will be rough going for all but the most devoted readers.

But while Johnson was a serious scholar, and while he has been well served by two more serious scholars, he wasn't writing only for other academics. Johnson once said he "rejoice[d] to concur with the common reader," and this "common reader . . . uncorrupted with literary prejudices," was his ideal audience. Johnson has a reputation for being a difficult, even a forbidding, writer; but he could be admirably direct and powerful when he chose to be. And some of his best writing appears in the *Dictionary* and in *Johnson on the English Language*, especially the preface to his *Dictionary* and the drafts of the earlier *Plan of an English Dictionary* that mapped his territory before setting out.

The preface opens with his gloomy survey of the prospect before him:

> It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.
>
> Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pionier of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths of Learning and Genius, who press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other authour may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompence has been yet granted to very few.

And yet this "humble drudge" went on to summarize both the state of the language and the nature of his work. It's clear that he had prescriptive intentions at the beginning of his labors: "When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated." He then described in detail how

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he proceeded, beginning with "the perusal of our writers"—Johnson read many hundreds of works of English literature, marking them up as he went—and noting along the way "whatever might be of use to ascertain or illustrate any word or phrase."

He recounted his efforts to reduce the notoriously inconsistent spelling of English words to something like a logical system. He wrestled with the relationships between words and their roots. He considered the blend of Germanic and Latinate words that make up English.

Not everything came out the way he had hoped. "I laboured to settle the orthography, display the analogy, regulate the structures, and ascertain the signification of *English* words, to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer," he admitted, "but I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations." He wanted to show for each word "by what gradations of intermediate sense it has passed from its primitive to its remote and accidental signification," but found this plan was "not always practicable" because "kindred senses may be so interwoven, that the perplexity cannot be disentangled, nor any reason be assigned why one should be ranged before the other."

He also recognized that many of his suggestions would do little good. Besides, any proposed change to the language is bound to cause inconvenience. "It has been asserted," he wrote, "that for the law to be *known*, is of more importance than to be *right*. Change, says *Hooker*, is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better." His conclusion was glum: "The *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. . . . I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."

And yet, for all its failures, Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* remains tremendously insightful and influential, perhaps the only reference work that's also a classic of English literature. So what did Johnson think about prescription versus description? Was his *Dictionary* fundamentally conservative or progressive?

People on all sides have the bad habit of attributing beliefs to Johnson that he never held. To his supporters, he's the embodiment of their own convictions; to his detractors, he's the embodiment of everything they despise. That may be inevitable. But the real Samuel Johnson—whether prescriptive or descriptive, whether conservative or liberal—will be found only in the pages of his works. Those works are still eminently readable, and now his writings on language are available in a more authoritative form than ever before. For anyone interested in the language, *Johnson on the English Language* will more than repay the time it takes to read. ♦

The Newer South

How Jim Crow died at the hands of blacks and whites.

BY ERIC J. SUNDQUIST

"I loved Negroes," recalled Sarah Patton Boyle in *The Desegregated Heart*, her 1962 memoir of conversion to civil rights activism in Charlottesville, Virginia. "I believed that our relationship was complementary and mutually satisfying." But when a Negro did not "keep his place," she confessed, "I felt outraged."

If a confirmed liberal had to overcome such deeply ingrained attitudes, no wonder those white southerners dedicated to segregation, a clear majority well into the 1960s, might react with even greater apprehension and bewilderment to the downfall of Jim Crow. No wonder they might elect as their governor a fried chicken restaurateur who, in defiance of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that forced him to integrate or shut down, recited the Ten Commandments, railed at "Communists" such as Robert Kennedy, and hawked autographed ax handles—chicken "drumsticks," he called them—symbolizing his rebellion against federal despotism.

There Goes My Everything
White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights: 1945-1975
by Jason Sokol
Knopf, 448 pp., $27.95

Having risen from humble beginnings to modest prosperity, Lester Maddox awoke one day to find his dream of serving whom he pleased in his popular restaurant shattered. But his declaration that "America will triumph. . . . Freedom will prevail"—by which he meant a nation respectful of states' rights and his own freedom of association—was anachronistic almost as soon as it was uttered. Propelled by an electoral fluke into the governorship of Georgia in 1966, Maddox embodied the tumult faced by southern whites grappling with, and finally submitting to, desegregation. He personally attempted to raise state capitol flags that had been lowered to half-mast following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., whom he considered an enemy of the United States, yet he was also the first governor in the Deep South to appoint blacks to state boards.

Eric J. Sundquist, UCLA Foundation professor of literature at the University of California, Los Angeles, is the author, most recently, of Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America.

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Maddox never experienced the transformative spiritual rebirth that returned George Wallace to the Alabama governorship as an integrationist two decades after his infamous "Segregation forever" inaugural, but in baffling his "liberal doubters just as surely as he surprised his Klan supporters," suggests Jason Sokol, he evinced the contradictions felt by many a southern white in the age of civil rights.

Corbis / Flip Schulke

Selma, Alabama, 1965

Well-known exponents of segregation such as Maddox and Wallace, along with recognized champions of integration such as Ralph McGill and Robert Penn Warren, play a part in Sokol's account of the liberation from racial strictures achieved by *whites* during the civil rights movement. But in focusing largely on the perspectives of common men and women across the states of the former Confederacy—businessmen, teachers, ministers, housewives, small-town politicians, officers of the law—he makes visceral the convulsions produced when most everything white southerners believed about blacks proved mistaken. (Sokol's title, evocative but inadequately explained, is borrowed from a tune by country songwriter Dallas Frazier.)

Collecting views from small towns as well as large, from those with Ku Klux Klan or White Citizens Council affiliations as well as those inclined, openly or secretly, to buck segregation, Sokol offers a compelling, if somewhat repetitive, portrait of the social revolution that redeemed the nation's soul and reshaped its political landscape.

For every crusading liberal and every bomb-throwing white supremacist, as Sokol demonstrates, there were thousands of average folks caught in between, struggling not just to accept blacks as equals but also to square their belief in law and order with their resentment of federal coercion.

Some, like Maddox, felt that they were the victims, that their rights were being trampled and their livelihoods threatened. "Who says the nigger is on the bottom?" complained one Alabama police officer. "He's calling the tune, and we run to hear it." Others adjusted to the new order in name only—"we break every glass they drink out of," said a bar owner forced to serve blacks, "there ain't no law against that"—or adopted what Sokol refers to as the "vernacular of invisibility," paying blacks no attention and pretending nothing had changed.

Year by year, however, a larger number had their illusions about "our Negroes" exposed, and, slowly, their hearts and minds desegregated. Surprised by the evidence of black abuse, discrimination, and poverty chronicled in Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, one white teenager asked a black acquaintance, "Is this book true?!"

Insofar as popular memory of the era tends to be dominated by the words and deeds of radical reactionaries, whether in the statehouse or in the street, Sokol's more nuanced account provides an important corrective. Not only was the nation at large sickened by images of dogs, fire hoses, tear gas, and truncheons wielded against nonviolent demonstrators or by the rabble jeering at innocent schoolchildren, so, too, were many white southerners.

Integration in public education posed especially hard choices for whites accustomed to a time-honored racial hierarchy, choices that proved traumatic not simply because of black protest or federal decree. When officials closed schools or threatened to do so in response to court-ordered desegregation, white parents faced a sharp dilemma. They may have preferred segregated schools to integrated schools, but most preferred compliance with the law and access to education to the grandstanding of state and local politicians. A new attempt to secede from the Union because of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, remarked a New Orleans truck driver, would be a greater disaster than losing our "segregation virginity."

The man in question was among those whites swept up in the contentious 1960 desegregation battle in the city's 9th Ward—a neighborhood made newly notorious by Hurricane Katrina—where a majority of white parents initially *did* prefer closed schools, and launched a massive boycott in protest of a federal judge's order to desegregate. Sokol's case study of the 9th Ward, in particular his portrayal of those parents who braved ranting mobs to enroll their *white* children in integrated schools, vividly captures the turmoil of a community divided against itself, as well as the courage of families who resented their neighbors'

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strong-arm tactics more than they endorsed black equality.

Given the whipsaw emotions set loose by the black freedom movement, doing the right thing, even under duress, was no easy matter. One of Sokol's most striking vignettes concerns James Brock, proprietor of the Monson Motor Lodge in St. Augustine, Florida. Early in 1964, Martin Luther King engaged in a much-publicized dialogue with Brock, King explaining the humiliation faced by blacks when they were denied service, Brock explaining why serving blacks violated his rights and would destroy his business. Subsequent protests in St. Augustine led to several hundred arrests, but after passage of the Civil Rights Act, local business leaders voted overwhelmingly to comply.

Soon thereafter, Andrew Young, then one of King's lieutenants, was served at the motel's restaurant—the waitress who once poured coffee on him now greeted him with a smile—but Brock and others who began to serve blacks were promptly stopped by white supremacist counterattacks. Within the span of a month, as Sokol reports, Brock both doused black protestors with muriatic acid when they staged a "swim-in" at his motel pool and had his property firebombed by the Klan.

In St. Augustine and elsewhere, resegregation thus played leapfrog with reintegration, law vying with custom until, at last, law won.

The surprise, however, is how quickly things changed. Although it would take a generation or more to root out the most stubborn racism—only after 30 years, for example, was Byron de la Beckwith, the murderer of NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers, brought to justice—it is remarkable that, by 1965, according to one government estimate, 75 percent of those businesses affected by Title II of the Civil Rights Act were already in compliance. And only one year after the Voting Rights Act, passed that same year, almost half of blacks in the Deep South had registered, leading soon to reversals of fortune once unimaginable: black city council and school board members, black sheriffs, black mayors.

Moreover, despite white flight to the suburbs and the subterfuge of segregation academies, the South by 1973 had a higher public school desegregation index than any other part of the country, with 46 percent of black children instructed in integrated classrooms.

By the same token, in a much-studied phenomenon that Sokol's work helps to explain at a grassroots level, the advent of biracial rule in the South was accompanied by a political realignment that, starting in 1968, helped propel Republicans to victory in seven of the next 10 presidential elections (southern Democrats, of course, won the remaining contests). Backlash against court-ordered busing, a key instrument of integration, was by no means exclusively a white issue in the South. But along with reaction to the rioting and anarchy attributed to Black Power and the New Left in the urban North and West, it typified a retrenchment among centrist whites that became national in scope.

"I just couldn't vote like all the hippies," exclaimed one lifelong Democrat of his ballot for Richard Nixon in 1972.

From today's vantage point, the pre-civil rights South seems a bizarre relic—until, that is, some ghost from the Jim Crow past abruptly looms up, a painful lesson learned by Mississippi's senator Trent Lott, unseated as majority leader in 2002 after his ill-advised birthday tribute to Strom Thurmond's 1948 Dixiecrat campaign. Still, whatever lingering allure the Lost Cause may hold for the region and the nation, no one can reasonably doubt the triumph, in law and in shared belief, of the civil rights movement. Thanks to Jason Sokol, we now have a richer understanding of the hard, soul-searching journey undertaken by southern whites to get on the right side of black freedom. ♦

The Other War

One Afghan city and American foreign policy.

BY VANCE SERCHUK

There is no shortage of books about the war in Iraq. Journalistic "histories of the present," self-serving memoirs by former government officials, ideological hatchet jobs by Beltway pundits—the sheer tonnage of hardcovers generated by the U.S. invasion and its aftermath is enough to dam the Tigris and the Euphrates.

The Punishment of Virtue
Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban
by Sarah Chayes
Penguin, 320 pp., $25.95

By contrast, the publishing industry has churned out almost nothing about postwar Afghanistan. The assorted policymakers who have served in Kabul have refrained from spilling their secrets after returning home, while none of the reporters dispatched there have produced anything resembling a definitive account of the country's trajectory since 2001.

Instead, the few individuals who have written books about Afghanistan have tended to be mavericks: idiosyncratic, adventurous characters who defy easy categorization. There is Rory Stewart, the former British officer who, shortly after the Taliban fell, decided to walk across Afghanistan, trekking 500 miles from Herat to Kabul in the dead of

Vance Serchuk is a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

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Reuters / Corbis / Adrees Latif

Pashtun boy in a poppy field, near Kandahar, 2004

winter. His account of this adventure, *The Places in Between*, is as extraordinary as it is improbable. Then there's Åsne Seierstad, the Norwegian journalist and author of *The Bookseller of Kabul,* who cloistered herself with an Afghan family for several months in 2002, using the personal histories of her hosts to tell the larger story of the postwar period.

Now comes Sarah Chayes, whose *Punishment of Virtue* is arguably the best book yet about politics and power in Afghanistan after the Taliban, and squarely in the maverick camp. Chayes was a National Public Radio correspondent who volunteered, in the aftermath of September 11, to go to Quetta, Pakistan, and then sneaked north across the border to Kandahar. Like the rest of the media horde that rushed into Afghanistan just as the Taliban were retreating from it, Chayes arrived knowing virtually nothing about the strange place in which she suddenly found herself. Unlike the rest, she stuck around, moving in with Afghans, learning Pashto, adopting local dress—going native, in other words, and to an extent few would dare.

This volume is the product of five years' worth of observations and insights in Kandahar, where Chayes eventually left her reporting career for a job running a nongovernmental organization. The result is a mix of personal memoir, investigative journalism, and political advocacy, with frequent digressions into Afghan history and culture.

To be clear, Kandahar is the sort of place that most Americans would sooner chew broken glass than set foot in, "a town with no banks, no commercial airport, little running water, precarious electricity, and hardly a paved road in sight." It was the stronghold of the Taliban regime, and its inhabitants are often reviled even among Afghans for being a violent, duplicitous lot. To Chayes's credit the portrait she draws of Kandahar is far more nuanced and interesting than just another postcard from hell. As it happens, she genuinely *likes* the city, "a way station for traders, warriors, immigrants and invaders," a crossroads of Indian, Iranian, and Central Asian cultures, and the place where the modern Afghan state first coalesced. There is something about Kandahar, she writes, "that goes right to the marrow of Afghanistan's bones."

Chayes captures the optimism that swept Kandahar following the Taliban's ouster, when policemen would stop traffic in order to shake her hand, and little girls celebrated the chance to attend school for the first time in their lives, "squealing and mimicking the act of writing with fingers on their miniature palms." It's precisely this fleeting image of Kandahar as something other than the heart of darkness—a place populated by decent human beings eager to live under the protection of a Pax Americana—that makes Chayes's story so poignant, especially as the shadow of the Taliban's resurgence begins to creep over it.

The Punishment of Virtue traces the arc of the Taliban's postwar guerrilla campaign, starting with the threats and "night letters . . . a folded slip of paper tucked into a crack in the door of the mosque," damning the Karzai government for apostasy, or a note warning parents to stop sending their daughters to school. Next came the first attacks—the execution of an aid worker here, an assault on a police garrison there—and then a wave of assassinations of political, civil, and religious leaders, including one of Chayes's best friends, whose June 2005 murder opens and closes the book.

Chayes bluntly attributes this escalating violence first and foremost to Pakistan, whose government contin-

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ues to consider Kandahar part of its territory and sees the Taliban as a means to reclaim it. While Islamabad has captured and surrendered a steady stream of al Qaeda operatives since September 11—"a kind of bank account, money squirreled away to be exchanged later for Washington's indulgence"—it has failed to crack down on the Taliban leaders who operate in plain sight.

"They paraded around Quetta; they carried guns and weapons-authorization cards issued by the Pakistani government; their offices and lodging were located in a well-known Quetta neighborhood, previously provided to the anti-Soviet mujahedeen," Chayes writes with frustration. As one American soldier grouses, "The Pakistani border is just an imaginary line keeping us from doing our job."

Chayes's hawkishness may come as a surprise to some, given that her biography reads like a parody of blue state liberalism: an NPR reporter from Massachusetts who spent a decade in Paris. But for the most, Chayes is hard-headed in her analysis of Kandahar, and impatient with ideological shibboleths. To her credit, she slams aid workers who blame the American military for blurring the line between war fighting and reconstruction and who believe they can stay "neutral" in the struggle against the Taliban.

"I think the presence of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan made all of us safer," she writes. Besides, "what civilian NGO has postoperation assessment built into its mode of functioning? Of course, the military did not always get it right. . . . Still, the procedure exists and compared not so badly to the ways of self-righteous humanitarians, myself included, who use the angelic nature of their self-sacrifice to cover everything from excessive salaries to an utter lack of accountability."

If *The Punishment of Virtue* has a weakness, it's that it loses steam the closer it gets to the present. It is strongest in its treatment of events from late 2001 through early 2004, but the last few years get desultory treatment. Additionally, because of her focus on events in Kandahar, Chayes neglects to say much about the overall evolution of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan, fostering the false impression that it's been relatively static. There is no mention of the Bush administration's 2002-2003 policy review, which attempted to tackle several of the problems that Chayes identifies, including the need to roll back some of the worst warlords and bring more Pashtuns into government. Other key developments—the creation of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the shift from a counterterrorism to counterinsurgency strategy, and the expansion of NATO's area of responsibility into southern Afghanistan—also go unexplored. These are disappointing omissions.

In the end, however, *The Punishment of Virtue* isn't intended as a detached, dispassionate history of postwar Afghanistan but an impressionistic, and intensely personal, account of one intrepid explorer there. As Sarah Chayes rightly observes, "Afghanistan is a place of too many layers to give itself up to the tactics of a rushed conformity. Afghanistan only uncovers itself with intimacy. And intimacy takes time."

This is a difficult lesson for the institutions of American foreign policy, which tend to treat personnel as interchangeable parts in a neverending, global merry-go-round. Observing the human traffic through the American Embassy during the months after the removal of the Taliban, Chayes concludes, "The significance of such a rapid changeover was that the United States had, in effect, no policy in Afghanistan. There was no strategy for targeting reconstruction dollars so as to produce the greatest positive domino effect. Worse, there was not even a clear notion of what the desired 'end state' in Afghanistan was."

The truth is, it's hard to imagine an American official either willing or permitted to live like Chayes, whose knowledge and expertise about Afghanistan are ultimately inseparable from the personal relationships and contacts she cultivated over a half-decade there. The most important insight *The Punishment of Virtue* offers has less to do with its narrative, and more to do with its remarkable narrator. ♦

Forgotten Friends

Why are there no Arab names at Yad Vashem?

BY ROGER KAPLAN

In December 1942, Joseph Scemla and his family, successful textile merchants in Tunis, suddenly found themselves in grave danger.

Among the Righteous
Lost Stories From the Holocaust's Long Reach Into Arab Lands
by Robert Satloff
PublicAffairs, 251 pp., $26

The Axis armies and their French collaborators, until then in control of the southern shores of the western Mediterranean, and threatening British power in Egypt, were thrown on the defensive by the American invasion of Morocco and Algeria. This occurred at about the same time that General Montgomery successfully counterattacked across Libya, assisted by the Free French (mostly Senegalese infantry) coming up from the south. The Germans decided to dig in, a strategy the Italians reluctantly followed, and for a few months until the spring of 1943, Tunisia, a mild-tempered country that had displayed little interest in military matters since Hannibal,

Roger Kaplan is author of Conservative Socialism: The Decline of Radicalism and the Triumph of the Left in France.

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became one of the major battlegrounds of World War II.

With German troops pouring in, the sensible course for Tunisia's Jews was to lie low—or get out.

For families like the Scemlas, this represented the last chapter in an ordeal that began with the fall of the Third Republic in June 1940 and, in the months following, the imposition of anti-Semitic legislation throughout metropolitan and overseas France, including Tunisia, by the Vichy regime of Marshal Philippe Pétain. Overnight, to be a Jew in a French-administered land meant going from full citizenship to full membership in an alien and despised group marked for extermination. Jews lost even the protections accorded non-Muslims in the lands of Islam. Commerce, professions, advanced studies, entry into the civil service or military—all were forbidden. Jews had to hide their assets or see them confiscated. And even as they expected their deliverance at the hands of the advancing Allies, their short-term prospects went from terrible to desperate with the arrival of the German, French, and Italian *gestapists* whose orders were not just to persecute but to kill.

The Scemla family decided to entrust their property to a Muslim associate and make a run for it. Unfortunately, the associate was an informer who betrayed them to the Germans in early 1943. Three of the Scemla men—Joseph and his two sons—were taken to concentration camps in Germany, where they were killed.

The unusual feature of this bitter story involves the transfer of Jews to Germany: Most of the Jews of Tunisia and nearby lands under Nazi or French fascist control were persecuted in regional camps or prisons. In its substance, however, the story is not unusual. The Jews of the east discovered to their dismay that their neighbors were all too willing to turn into murderers when the Nazis offered them the opportunity. Willing participants or indifferent onlookers, the Muslims behaved no better during the Holocaust than the Christians of Nazi-occupied Europe. (The informer, by the way, was imprisoned when the Free French restored republican legality in Tunisia, and served a 10-year prison term.)

Yet, just as in Europe, there surely were exceptions. This, at any rate, was the notion that led Robert Satloff on his quest for a Muslim Oskar Schindler or Raoul Wallenberg. A leading expert on the Arab world, and as executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Satloff is uniquely qualified to address the broader issue he raises in this sad and interesting book: During the Holocaust, where were the Arabs? And more precisely, whose side were they on?

His answers are tempered by years of immersion in Arabic, Arab history, and contemporary Arab politics. He understands as well as anyone the ambiguous political context of the Arabs in modern times, and the resulting confusions regarding historical events. Viewing themselves as the victims of modern European aggression, Arabs find it difficult to acknowledge even passive responsibility for such events as the herding of Jews into concentration camps in the Sahara, where they tortured and killed them under the orders of French or German officers.

Satloff understands the ambivalence of a Tunisian, for example, regarding the war, such as it seemed in 1941 or '42. Why not root for Germany? The colonial situation in North Africa was unjust and cruel and a German victory might change it. Yet this did not necessarily imply supporting appalling persecutions that, as most leading Muslim authorities knew, could not be condoned by Islam, which explicitly prohibits racism. And indeed, as Satloff reports, there *were* Muslims who did what they could to block the persecutions.

So why is it, he wonders, that among the more than 22,000 names inscribed at Yad Vashem as "Righteous among the nations" for saving Jews, there is not one Arab? For as he researched stories like the Scemlas' he found that, while there were Arabs who risked their lives under Nazi noses to save Jews, none of them or their descendants claimed it had much, if anything, to do with Jews. And this was not because they viewed their neighbors as compatriots rather than as Jews—which could be seen as reflecting a strong civic sense—but because they really did not want to make an issue of the Holocaust's reach into their lands.

But what if this notion were challenged? What if the Arabs (and the Jews) saw that their intermingled histories must include the World War II years? With a shared narrative, including stories of complicity as well as resistance to mass murder, it might be possible to rethink the relations between peoples who seem stuck in a perpetual conflict based on an impossible who-did-what-first argument.

On the surface, Satloff's idea—his starting question—is absurd: Why should anyone expect Iran's president or your ordinary Gaza human explosive to take the trouble to even read about the Holocaust, let alone its reaches beyond Europe? Why should a man like Hezbollah's leader, or one of his storm troopers, even want to think about the implications of what happened in Morocco in 1942 or Tunisia in 1943 or Paris in 1944?

What happened—and Satloff is meticulous in distinguishing between what we can certify from the historical record and what remains legend and folklore—is that Mohammed V, the sultan of Morocco, reluctantly governing under a French protectorate and plotting his eventual restoration of full sovereignty, refused to apply the Vichy anti-Semitic decrees. What happened is that a Tunisian named Khaled Abdelwahhab sheltered close to 2,000 Jews in danger of deportation on his farming estate, part of which the Germans were using as barracks. What happened is that in the Grande Mosque of Paris, the "official" center of French Islam a few blocks from the Pantheon, Kaddour Benghabrit, the leader of what already was a significant French Muslim population (largely made up of World War I veterans from North Africa and their fami-

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lies), sheltered Jewish resistance fighters and others escaping the Nazis.

Why is not one of these individuals inscribed at Yad Vashem? The answer is of stupefying simplicity, and just for bringing this point out *Among the Righteous* is worth reading: The Arabs themselves do not want to be there.

Satloff found that there exists a kind of collective Muslim denial regarding the Holocaust. The Muslims do not want to study the Holocaust, or the part they played in it, even if the part is heroic. Admittedly, the Holocaust in Tunisia and other Arab countries was marginal compared with what was taking place in Europe: There were, after all, only a few hundred thousand Jews in Muslim countries, and the anti-Semitic regimes of Europe were able to impose their policies in these countries only until the spring of 1943. But apart from the excuse of putting a vast crime "in perspective," it is convenient for Arabs (and their Western sympathizers) to argue that, since 1948 and the creation of the state of Israel, they are paying for a great European crime. This view, recently reiterated by the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (a Persian, not an Arab) to justify wiping Israel off the map, is conventional in Muslim countries.

With this mindset, the Arabs simply cannot touch a subject that would force them to recast the whole history of the past half-century by putting Jews and Israel in a fresh historical light. They are not about to deny that they saved their neighbors when they did—they liked their neighbors—but they refuse to connect this to events that, in their reading of history, were strictly a European injustice for which they are still paying.

Satloff found amazing examples of this attitude, such as the entire extended family of a true hero, the Tunisian nationalist leader Mohammed Chenik, a great liberal who was brushed aside by the regime of Habib Bourguiba, even though he did as much as any other individual (including Bourguiba himself) to negotiate a relatively peaceful transition to independence in 1956. Chenik saved many Jews when he was one of the primary interlocutors with the Germans in 1942-43. Today there is not a grandchild, nephew, cousin, or friend of Chenik who remembers him rescuing Jews. At one point Satloff thought he had found an Egyptian Wallenberg who served in Berlin at the beginning of the war. But not even the most liberal and cosmopolitan Egyptians, knowledgeable about their country's diplomatic history, wanted to help him track down the facts on what would have been a case worthy of inclusion at Yad Vashem.

Robert Satloff, always the American in his optimism, notes in conclusion that, lately, Arab voices have been heard calling for a reexamination of the Holocaust as a seminal event not only in European history but in world—and thus certainly Arab—history. As one of them has written: "The genocide's principal significance today is that it stands out as the archetype of the crime against humanity. It is the crucial relationship between the Holocaust and modernity that Arab opinion fails to understand."

Satloff would have liked to track down the author of this remarkable essay when he read those sentences, but while acknowledging that he teaches in a North African university, the writer prefers to remain anonymous. ♦

Motown Melodrama

A 'backstage musical' with electrifying moments.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

There are a million problems with *Dreamgirls*, the new movie musical. It chronicles the rising fortunes of a Motown-like record label and the singers who get involved with it, but none of the songs that make the label's fortune would even have made it to the flip side of a Motown 45. The one character who is always right about the music America wants to hear is the movie's villain, while his supposedly more principled underlings stand around whining about wanting to perform music that nobody rightly wants to hear.

Dreamgirls
Directed by Bill Condon

Dreamgirls strains for social significance to a laughable degree, with two black lovers fighting on a Detroit street while the city burns around them following the assassination of Martin Luther King. Most problematic is its Rube Goldberg structure: Its high point comes about an hour into the movie, and as a result you feel a little hung over through its final half.

And yet, and yet, and yet. The truth is that one can't ask for much more from a moviegoing experience. *Dreamgirls* is a propulsively entertaining melodrama in the great tradition of the backstage musical—one of those stories about the inner workings of show business that is, in reality, about as accurate a depiction of the entertainment world as *The Flintstones* is of the Stone Age.

The backstage musical is a genre as old as talking motion pictures. (The first talkie, *The Jazz Singer*, was a backstage musical of sorts.) *Dreamgirls* is an exceptionally juicy example. It offers thrilling re-creations of showbiz venues of yore—a Detroit theater in the early 1960s, a swanky Miami

John Podhoretz is THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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Beach nightclub complete with Don Rickles comic, a Vegas showroom at the height of the Ring-a-Ding-Ding days, an intimate rooftop jazz club gone to seed—with costumes and wigs and makeup to match each moment in pop-culture time.

The plot mirrors the rise of Diana Ross and the Supremes, as a trio of teenage girls forms a singing group called the Dreams. An ambitious hustler named Curtis Taylor Jr. (Jamie Foxx) arranges for them to become the backup singers to James Thunder Early (Eddie Murphy), an R&B star whose celebrity remains confined to the "race records" market. Curtis takes Effie (Jennifer Hudson), the Dreams' full-figured loudmouth lead singer, to his bed as he pines for her gorgeous backup, Deena (pop star Beyoncé Knowles). The third Dream, Lorrell, becomes Jimmy Early's mistress.

Impresario Curtis has a plan to get out of the musical ghetto and appeal to white audiences by smoothing out Jimmy Early's rough sound and sexualized stage antics and turning him into Johnny Mathis. Eddie Murphy has given remarkable performances in the past—he gave six or seven alone, as I recall, as an entire family in *The Nutty Professor*, and two in *Bowfinger* as a paranoid movie star and his nerdy brother—but he seems to have been given a new lease on life playing the glorious and ever-hungry Jimmy, who is incapable of suppressing his carnal exuberance unless he uses narcotics to do so. It's a vital and vivid piece of acting, as powerful in its moments of despair as when Jimmy is hurling himself about the stage.

Curtis gives up on Jimmy and decides to turn the Dreams into his crossover act. The problem is that his lover, Effie, is a female version of Jimmy, with her mammoth gospel voice. So he turns Deena—the prettiest and thinnest and most anodyne of the Dreams—into the lead singer and relegates Effie to backup. She is furious, and she rebels by showing up late for rehearsals and generally being difficult.

Dreamgirls has a difficulty in common with all backstage musicals, which is that the rise to glory is always much more exciting and vivid than what happens after the protagonists achieve triumphant success. Many backstage musicals solve the problem by having the movie end at the moment of triumph. *42nd Street* literally concludes with the thunderous applause of the Broadway audience on opening night as the curtain comes down on the show we've watched develop over the previous 90 minutes.

Paramount Pictures

Jennifer Hudson

But *Dreamgirls* is both more glorious and more problematic than most. Its moment of triumph is also a moment of devastation—both for the characters, the plot, and the movie itself.

That moment comes right in the middle, as a heartbroken Effie is fired from the act and dismissed from her lover's bed in a number called "It's All Over"—a double humiliation to which she responds with a song called "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going."

It is no exaggeration to say that the eight minutes containing these two numbers comprise one of the most overpowering sequences in the history of American film. Writer-director Bill Condon, who adapted the 1981 Broadway musical, keeps his camera moving around the movie's seven central characters (minus Early) as they engage and argue with the infuriated Effie. They circle her like buzzards as they attack and counterattack. She then turns on her boyfriend and informs him that "there's no way I can ever go . . . I'm not waking up tomorrow morning and finding that there's nobody there."

But Curtis has already dumped her twice, and as she hollers out words of romantic perseverance, she knows and we know that what she's actually experiencing is a moment of pure existential abandonment. (The song, by composer Henry Krieger and the late lyricist Tom Eyen, is so extraordinary it only serves as a reminder of how unmemorable the rest of the score is.) The sequence comes closer than anything I've ever seen on screen at duplicating the raw power of opera.

A young singer named Jennifer Holliday, who has never done anything else of note, became a Broadway legend 25 years ago with her original performance of "And I Am Telling You" (which is available, complete with spine chills, on YouTube). The same thing is about to happen for Jennifer Hudson, who plays Effie in the movie. This is an ineffable cinematic moment, a scene people will remember 70 years from now the way people still talk about Judy Garland sitting on that haystack singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

Of course, there's still a whole lot to get through—what happens to Effie and the Dreams and Curtis and Jimmy. And we do get through it, and what we see is just fine with many moments that are better than just fine. Ultimately, *Dreamgirls* can't compete with itself. But then, what could? ♦

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